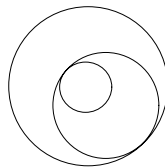


Not Class But Struggle

NOT CLASS BUT STRUGGLE
Critical Ouvertures to Pierre Bourdieu's Sociology

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To my mother and the memory of my father

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* * *

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5. (with J. P. Roos) '[Will to a Distinctive Life Style:] In Search of the Finnish New Middle Class'. *Acta Sociologica* 28 (1985): 3, pp. 257–274. Enlarged version 'Att vilja leva annorlunda' published in Swedish in Donald Broady (ed.), *Kultur och utbildning: Om Pierre Bourdieus sociologi*. UHÄ; FoU, Skriftserie 1985:4. Stockholm 1986, pp. 211–244; the Finnish translation 'Toisin elämisen halu – uutta keskiluokkaa etsimässä' published in J. P. Roos, *Elämäntavasta elämäkertaan: Elämäntapaa etsimässä* 2. Jyväskylä: Tutkijaliitto 1988, pp. 69–96.

Introduction

Pierre Bourdieu is one of the most commanding figures in French intellectual life over the past 20 years. In autumn 1998, the time I am finishing this thesis, Pierre Bourdieu is – *nolens volens* – more than ever a ‘personne médiatique’, a media person. Within the last six months Bourdieu has – thanks to his active political writing in the French press – received a great deal of media publicity not only in France, but also abroad.¹ This is a paradoxical situation for an intellectual who has been very anti-media, and has strongly criticised the media, particularly television, for, among other things, ‘fast-thinking’ (Bourdieu 1996a).

On the other hand, one could say that Bourdieu himself has sought out publicity to promote some political issues which he has found important. Among other things, he has come out in favour of the ‘European welfare state’ and against neoliberalism (see Bourdieu 1998a). In January 1998, Bourdieu was seen standing in the midst of militant student demonstrators in front of the occupied École Normale Supérieure (ENS), the respected school he had himself attended in his youth. Bourdieu was present there to express his sympathies with the unemployed. This would not be the first time in the 1990s that Bourdieu had stepped out of his study to support social movements. In December 1995 he spoke to public sector strikers in the demonstration at the Gare de Lyon (see Bourdieu 1998a, 30–33). These events were even more remarkable when one realises that unlike many other French intellectuals, Bourdieu had not been actively involved in the events of 1968 (though one should

add that ever since the early 1980s Bourdieu had intervened in political and cultural issues; this will be touched upon in Chapter 1).

As a politically active public figure Bourdieu has not only received wide media coverage, he has also become a very controversial figure in the French intellectual scene. This has also received ‘anti-bourdieuian’ criticism. The most furious critique published quite recently, is Jeannine Verdès-Leroux’s polemical *Le Savant et la politique* (Verdès-Leroux 1998), in which she claims Bourdieu’s sociology is *sociologie à l’estomac* – ‘impudent sociology’. She also characterises Bourdieu’s work as no less than ‘pessimistic Leninism supported by a heavy scientific apparatus’ (‘léninisme pessimiste rehaussé par un lourd appareil scientifique’). In particular Verdès-Leroux accuses Bourdieu of ‘sociological terrorism’, that is of misusing his prestigious scientific authority in political interventions, and thus breaking the Weberian rule of *Wertfreiheit*. As a consequence, a new word has been coined by the ‘anti-bourdieuians’: ‘le bourdieusisme’.

On the whole, I find Verdès-Leroux’s polemic quite unfair and exaggerated (I have never, for example, seen such a large number of question and exclamation marks compensating for real arguments in one book). But there are, however, some interesting points in her critique as regards Bourdieu’s role as an intellectual, that is, if we dissociate it from the polemical froth of the critique. In Chapter 1 I shall try to illuminate this topic in a less polemical manner by applying Bourdieu’s sociological thought to himself, looking at his intellectual biography, addressing Bourdieu’s place in the field of *homines academici*, and showing how his place is reflected in his sociological thinking. The field of intellectuals is also dealt with theoretically in Chapter 3.

Key concepts

As the subtitle of this thesis suggests, it is intended as a series of critical ouvertures – openings or introductions – to Pierre Bour-

dieu's work. Needless to say, this small study does not, however, aim to give a comprehensive understanding or interpretation of Bourdieu's entire *oeuvre* – consisting of more than thirty books and amounting to over 10,000 pages. It should be mentioned that there are, to my mind, some excellent, almost encyclopedic presentations of Bourdieu's thinking (e.g. Broady 1992, unfortunately only in Swedish, and Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). Nor is mine a systematic introduction to the conceptual apparatus of Bourdieu's sociology. Hence, for example, many concepts are taken for granted, while only a few notions are taken up for closer critical discussion (this implies that some understanding of Bourdieu's sociology is assumed from readers). All in all, it has only been possible here to touch upon some central aspects of Bourdieu's thought; and I have had to exclude many of his important works, such as *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977) and *The Logic of Practice* (1990a).

It has often been said that the most outstanding sociologists of our time are now – since Niklas Luhmann's death this autumn – Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens, if we exclude Jürgen Habermas, who today is considered a philosopher rather than a sociologist.² If we compare the work of these sociological thinkers, I would say that Bourdieu is not as systematic a theoretician as Luhmann with his system theory. On the other hand, Luhmann and Giddens have hardly carried out any empirical research at all, whereas Bourdieu has been consciously combining his theoretical framework with empirical data. One might add that Giddens has been theoretically influenced by Bourdieu and, like Bourdieu, he has set out to rethink the relationship between structure and agency (cf. Giddens 1984; Mouzelis 1995, 100–124). As for empirical research, Bourdieu has conducted ethnological field research as well as sociological research (especially statistical surveys, but also qualitative interviews) – though he has done it quite freely without respecting the conventional rules and hence has been criticised for the sloppy use of empirical research methods, and not only by Verdès-Leroux

(for a critique of Bourdieu's interview techniques in *La Misère du monde*, see Mayer 1995).

Furthermore, Bourdieu has clearly declared himself against both theoreticism and empiricism (see Bourdieu 1993a, 265), though one would not call his theory as such a Mertonian middle-range theory. Certainly Bourdieu is not a 'pure' theoretician like, for example, Luhmann. Bourdieu says: 'I have combated untheoretical empiricism vigorously enough to be as able to reject the unempirical conceptualisations of the pure "theoretician"' (Honneth et al 1986b, 39).

I think Donald Broady (1990) is right in saying that Bourdieu's sociology is above all the sociology of knowledge, not a general theory of society. But more specifically, in my opinion, it is also primarily the sociology of domination or symbolic power, and not so much, as every now and then Bourdieu's work has been (mis)interpreted, a sociology of class. This Bourdieu has stated very clearly, especially about his arguably most seminal work, *La Distinction* (see Bourdieu 1989a, 407). This is the point that the title of this study – *Not Class But Struggle* – in general intends to emphasise. Of course, Bourdieu also discusses classes in many of his studies (cf. e.g. Bourdieu 1974), but he is more interested in elaborating relationships of domination or power than developing any class theory proper. Moreover, while operating with 'class' concepts, he uses them rather roughly, for example in his taxonomy presented in *La Distinction* (from the 'dominant class' to the 'classes populaires'). And certainly his major sociological contributions are not in the field of class theory, even if some of them touch upon the analysis of classes. As for the concept of the 'new' middle class, it is dealt with elsewhere in this book (see Chapter 5).

Bourdieu is known for his facility in coining new concepts and terms. The key concepts of his sociology are: capital, habitus and field – and I would like to add as an underlying principle: struggle. This idea is developed in Chapter 2 ('Taste as a Struggle') while

attempting to explicate some aspects of Bourdieu's thinking through a comparison between Bourdieu and Nietzsche. Interestingly enough, Verdès-Leroux has now come to a similar conclusion (excluding her further conclusions); she writes, that 'the world of Bourdieu' is a 'world of permanent and eternal struggles' (Verdès-Leroux 1998, 14). It truly seems that Bourdieu's 'world view' is that of a struggle *mutatis mutandis* between dominators and the dominated. To put it roughly, according to Bourdieu, basically all interests are submitted to this process of domination; there is no art for art's sake. And it is, if anything, his sociology of domination which Bourdieu stretches to the extent that it applies to all human spheres; only Bourdieu's reflexive sociology escapes that fate (this is considered in Chapters 1 and 2). In the end, Bourdieu's work then implies a kind of general theory of society.

There is one human realm, however, which is not completely affected by interests. Even for Bourdieu there is something which could be free of interests, and can sometimes be achieved, and that is 'pure love', *l'art pour l'art de l'amour*, which is a 'relatively recent historical invention' (Bourdieu 1998c, 118). But it is, however, very exceptional. In an interview on his latest book, *La Domination masculine* (Bourdieu 1998c), Bourdieu says about it: 'In reality, it [pure love] has only one chance in a thousand of succeeding' (Dans la réalité, ça [l'amour pur] n'a qu'une chance sur mille d'arriver; Bourdieu 1998d, 27).

As with his style, Bourdieu's sociology is also known – and criticised – for its ambiguous concepts and opaque definitions. Indeed, Bourdieu is not the most lucid of thinkers; he writes, for example, very long sentences and cultivates complicated formulations. But he does this deliberately. Bourdieu provides us with his own rationale for using such a special and difficult jargon:

Sociological language cannot be either neutral or clear [...] In contrast to the search for literary quality, the pursuit of rigour always leads one to sacrifice a neat formula, which can be strong and clear

because it falsifies, to a less appealing expression that is heavier but more accurate, more controlled. Thus the difficulty of style often comes from all the nuances, all the corrections, all the warnings, not to mention the reminders of definitions and principles that are needed in order for the discourse to bear within itself all the possible defences against hijacking and misappropriations. (Bourdieu 1993c, 21)

Nevertheless, this implies to some extent semantically vulnerable concepts, which invoke almost infinite discussions of Bourdieu's concepts. I shall not, however, take up this debate here, but will instead concentrate on those conceptual developments of Bourdieu which I have found most interesting or fruitful.

Bourdieu has also been blamed for flirting with philosophy and 'decorating' his sociological argumentation with numerous philosophical references (Verdès-Leroux 1998; Chauviré 1995). In my opinion, this is true to a certain degree, and it might indeed lead to misunderstandings. Bourdieu does, in fact, frequently allude to philosophical classics and even to analytical philosophy (Wittgenstein, Austin, Searle) which is a lesser-known tradition in France. He does this not merely for decorative reasons, but in the sense of being 'a philosopher among philosophers', as Chauviré (1995, 548) has aptly put it.

Chapter 1 considers Bourdieu's philosophical inclinations – and paradoxically also his antipathies to philosophy – which all directly stem from his educational background at the École Normale Supérieure (ENS). In effect, Bourdieu is originally a philosopher by training, though he converted to sociology in the late 1950s. Hence, Bourdieu's philosophical scholarship is anything but superficial snobbery.

The question of the applicability of Bourdieu's theories

In Chapters 3 and 5 I attempt to apply Bourdieu's theories of the intellectual field (*Homo Academicus*), on the one hand, and his theory of distinction, on the other, to Finnish society. The nature of

these chapters is basically experimental, i.e. to test and discuss the applicability of Bourdieu's ideas in another cultural terrain. Although Chapter 5 in particular is based on rather modest and somewhat old data, the comparative studies in these two chapters aim to say something sociologically substantial about certain aspects of Finnish society and culture. Chapter 4 is primarily a methodological discussion inspired by Bourdieu's theoretical thinking concerning (auto)biographical research. This discussion is also relevant to Chapters 1 and 5, though at times the content of Chapter 4 contradicts with Chapter 5. This is partly the result of Chapter 5 having been written much earlier.

The applicability and 'Frenchness' of Bourdieu's theories have been much discussed (for the possible application of Bourdieu's theories to Sweden, see Broady 1990, 303–307; applied to Finland, see Mäkelä 1985; Alapuro 1988). In his 'Preface to the English-Language Edition' of *La Distinction* Bourdieu (1984, xi–xii) himself discusses this problem and admits that 'by virtue of its empirical object' his theories are 'very French'. But by the same token he suggests seeking 'structural variants' and 'equivalent institutions in another social universe', such as American society. In general, it seems that Bourdieu is convinced of the universality of his theoretical models (*Homo Academicus*, *Distinction*), and considers that they could well be suitable as comparative models and thus be applicable to analysis of widely different societies, such as the USA, Germany and Japan (Bourdieu 1994; see also Bourdieu 1983, 11–12). Nowadays, there are quite a number of successful comparative studies or other applications based on or critically inspired by Bourdieu's theories (e.g., based on *Homo Academicus*: Pinto 1987; Sabour 1988; Klinge 1990; Mouzelis 1995, Appendix; based on *Distinction*: Eskola & Linko 1986; Lamont 1992; Sulkunen 1992; cf. also Boschetti 1985; Kauppi 1991 and 1994; Broady 1998).

In discussions on the applicability of Bourdieu's theories, a number of shortcomings to his theories have been pointed out. One

serious drawback is mentioned in Chapter 5. Namely, Bourdieu strangely neglects and ignores almost completely the important role of popular culture in his analysis of culture, concentrating exclusively on a rather old-fashioned hierarchy of tastes, and falling into an aristocratic view of highbrow culture, popular culture or ‘vulgar taste’ then being left in a more or less passive and marginal role. It is obvious that this black-and-white picture of Bourdieu’s canon no longer reflects the complexities of contemporary ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture (see Shusterman 1992, 172), not to mention the mechanisms of mode, etc.

But despite these qualifications Bourdieu’s model can be applied to popular culture, even to a comparative discussion of, say, hamburgers. Take, for example, the scene near the beginning of Quentin Tarantino’s film *Pulp Fiction* (Tarantino 1994, 14–15), where two professional killers, Vincent Vega (John Travolta) and Jules Winnfield (Samuel L. Jackson), chat while driving a car in Los Angeles, California, on their way to a killing job (Vincent Vega having just returned from a visit to Europe):

Vincent: But you know what the funniest thing about Europe is?

Jules: What?

V: It’s the little differences. I mean, they got the same shit over there that we got here, but it’s just, just it’s a little different.

J: Example?

V: Well, you can walk into a movie theater [in Amsterdam] and buy a beer. And I don’t mean just, like, in no paper cup. I’m talking about a glass of beer. And in Paris, you can buy a beer at McDonald’s. And, you know what they call a Quarter-Pounder with Cheese in Paris?

J: They don’t call it a Quarter-Pounder with Cheese?

V: No, man, they got the metric system there, they wouldn’t know what the fuck a Quarter-Pounder is.

J: What’d they call it?

V: They call it a Royale with Cheese.

J: (*repeating*) Royale with Cheese.

V: Yeah, that’s right.

- J: What'd they call a Big Mac?
 V: Well, Big Mac's a Big Mac, but they call it Le Big Mac.
 J: Le Big Mac. What do they call a Whopper?
 V: I dunno, I didn't go into a Burger King. But you know what they put on French fries in Holland instead of ketchup?
 J: What?
 V: Mayonnaise.
 J: Goddamn!
 V: I seen 'em do it, man. They fuckin' drown 'em in that shit.

It is as though Tarantino himself is basing this scene on Bourdieu's *Distinction*.

A note, finally, about some technical matters. As the first versions of the chapters included in this book have originally been written and published at different times, dating from 1985–1998, there are some unavoidable overlappings, as well as occasional contradictions in the argumentation. Although I have rewritten some parts (Chapters 2 and 4), I have not touched Chapters 3 and 5, which have not been written by me alone but with J. P. Roos. Consequently, some of the data in Chapter 3 and in particular Chapter 5 are outdated. Today, these chapters should be read more like experiments in comparative studies, though on the other hand they do contain knowledge which is relevant to the Finnish society of the days when they were first published. In a sense, they are in the spirit of Bourdieu, whose data in his seminal books, *La Distinction* (1979) and *Homo Academicus* (1984), were rather old, too, being collected in the 1960s and in the 1970s respectively; all the same, the data was above all meant to serve his theoretical innovations.

As for the references, I have whenever possible sought out English translations of especially Bourdieu's, but also some other authors' (e.g. Nietzsche's) works. When translations were not available, I have given my own.

1

Pierre Bourdieu as Homo Academicus: Studying Bourdieu's Thought From a Bourdieuian Perspective

I am socially classified and I know precisely what position I occupy in social classifications. If you understand my work, you can very easily deduce a great many things about me from my knowledge of this position and of what I write. I have given all the tools necessary for that; as for the rest, leave it to me... (Bourdieu in Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 203)

In an interview 'How Can "Free-floating Intellectuals" Be Set Free?' Pierre Bourdieu (1993b, 41–48; French original: Bourdieu 1980a, 72) contends that sociologists' privilege is not to be placed above those whom they classify, but is to know that they are classified and where. Here, an attempt is made to apply Bourdieu's sociological 'methods' to himself through looking at his intellectual biography, addressing Bourdieu's place in the field of *homines academici* and how his place is reflected in his sociological thought, particularly in his notion of 'reflexive sociology'.

In this chapter it is argued that there is a paradoxical point in Bourdieu's thought: on the one hand he develops his own reflexive sociology, i.e. a sociology that is disinterested or free of interests. On the other, Bourdieu's reflexive sociology, which is the sociology of knowledge and power, shows that nothing – including aesthetics – is disinterested except this sociology. As a sociologist, Bourdieu does not think that he stands above all classifications. He argues,

however, that his sociology does not take a stand for any class, though in general he is on the side of the ‘dominated’ (*dominés*). Free from resentment, he thinks that he can generously afford to look at things disinterestedly, to speak the truth scientifically and reflexively.

Studying Bourdieu’s thought from a Bourdieusian perspective

My fundamental research approach, namely to analyse Pierre Bourdieu’s thinking in a Bourdieusian framework, is not entirely original. It is, in fact, an approach that Bourdieu himself has discussed (see Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 202ff).

Wacquant and Bourdieu talk, albeit quite briefly, about ‘a Bourdieuan sociology of Bourdieu’. Wacquant refers to Bourdieu’s inaugural lecture *Leçon sur la leçon* at the Collège de France in which Bourdieu stated that ‘every position set forth by the [science of society] can and ought to apply to the sociologist himself’ (Bourdieu 1982, 7).

Bourdieu himself emphasises in many of his writings and particularly his interviews the importance of auto-analysis in sociology, i.e. reflexive sociology, including the auto-analysis of intellectuals. In his foreword to *Raisons pratiques* (Bourdieu 1994) he maintains that it is sociology’s job to analyse the questionable freedom or autonomy of e.g. intellectuals, but also that of sociology. The increasing consciousness of sociology’s social limits and necessities would, according to Bourdieu, increase the liberty of sociology itself. This is what I would call a sort of ‘Münchhausen trick’ – how to lift oneself up by pulling on one’s own hair (cf. also Chapter 2, ‘Taste as a Struggle’)¹.

As the title of this chapter suggests, I am interested in analysing Pierre Bourdieu’s thinking from a Bourdieusian framework. In other words, I would like to do to Bourdieu something similar to what he did to others, such as Martin Heidegger. Here I am following the

golden rule: do as you would be done by, or in particular continue what Bourdieu has already done himself as regards his auto-analysis. At the same time I shall also attempt to explicate some fundamental aspects of Bourdieu's thought. Overall my reading of Bourdieu is affirmative rather than critical, unlike say, Bridget Fowler's approach to Bourdieu (Fowler 1997).²

Bourdieu does not provide many clues to the critic, apart from occasional comments in his writings and interviews. The key texts in my analysis and interpretation of Bourdieu are the following ones:

Firstly, his book on Heidegger, *The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger*, originally published in French as an article (Bourdieu 1975; English translation Bourdieu 1991). This work offers me an exemplary and legitimate method of studying the case of Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu's study on Heidegger has been much discussed. Jeffrey Alexander, for example, criticises Bourdieu for being too straightforward, and he argues that in Bourdieu's analysis of Heidegger 'the philosophical field becomes a venue for power struggles which merely translate the class fractions of the wider domain' (Alexander 1995, 172). However, I shall not go into the details of this discussion here, as my primary approach is to apply a Bourdieusian analysis to Bourdieu, rather than to criticise his work.³

Secondly, the key texts include some of Bourdieu's so-called retrospective self-analyses (cf. his 'Passport to Duke'; Bourdieu 1996), and his interviews, especially one with Axel Honneth and others published in German in *Ästhetik und Kommunikation* (Honneth et al. 1986a; see in English Honneth et al. 1986b)⁴, and another with Loïc Wacquant in *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). There is also a small amount of biographical data on Bourdieu, and some provided by Bourdieu himself (e.g. his paper on 'An aspiring philosopher'; Bourdieu 1989b; cf. also Bourdieu 1997a: Chapter 1, Post-scriptum 1: 'Confessions impersonnelles' [impersonal confessions]). Bourdieu's Preface to the Eng-

lish Edition of *Homo Academicus* (1988) is also quite interesting in this context as Bourdieu calls the work an ‘anti-biography’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 213). The theme of (self)reflections on the French intellectual field has been very close to Bourdieu for a long time, at least since the 1960s, when he published his first analysis of this field – ‘a sociology of the history of French sociology’ (Bourdieu & Passeron 1967, 202).

Bourdieu wrote in the Preface to *The Political Ontology of Martin Heidegger* that his analysis was ‘devised primarily as an exercise in method, not as an accusation’ (Bourdieu 1991, vii). My own approach to Bourdieu is similar. Bourdieu’s study of Heidegger serves as an exemplary case of testing out a methodology rather than offering a direct critique of Bourdieu.

After completing his work Bourdieu has explained his reasons for studying the case of Heidegger (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 150):

[...] Heidegger interested me also as the exemplary incarnation of the ‘pure philosopher’ and I wanted to show, in what is apparently the most unfavourable case for the sociology of cultural works as I conceive it, that the method of analysis I propose can not only account for socio-political conditions of production of the work but also lead to a better understanding of the work itself, that is, in this case, the central thrust of Heideggerian philosophy, namely the ontologisation of historicism.

Bourdieu adds:

The value of Heidegger as the paradigmatic ‘pure’, ahistorical thinker who explicitly forbids and refuses to relate the thought to the thinker, to his biography [...], is to force us to rethink the links between philosophy and politics. (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 150)

What if we substitute – *mutatis mutandis* – Bourdieu’s name for Heidegger’s and translate this according to Bourdieu’s own intention; how does it sound? It would go as follows: The value of Bourdieu as the paradigmatic ‘impure’ or ‘vulgar’, historical thinker

who explicitly accepts and admits to relate the thought to the thinker, to his biography..., is to force us to think of the links between sociology and politics. This, I think, is very much a portrait that Bourdieu himself could accept – with certain reservations. Namely, there is a certain ambivalence in Bourdieu's self-reflection: Bourdieu explicitly refuses to relate the thought to the thinker in his own case, he is instead writing rather an anti(auto)biography (cf. *Homo Academicus*). On the other hand, speaking about his 'reluctance' to talk about himself, he does provide some explanation:

By revealing certain private information, by making bovaristic confessions about myself, my lifestyle, my preferences, I may give ammunition to people who utilize against sociology the most elementary weapon there is – relativism. (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 203)

Clearly Bourdieu is opposed to relativism; and to Bourdieu's mind, being aware of one's place in sociological classifications does not imply a relativist sociology, but rather reflexive, scientific sociology.

But Bourdieu also claims that in *Homo Academicus* he writes a lot about himself:

[...] I have never ceased taking myself as an object, not in a narcissistic sense but as one representative of a category [...] when I analyse myself – *Homo Academicus* contains pages and pages on me to the extent that I belonged to the category I call the 'oblates' – I say aloud the truth of others speaking about myself. (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 203)

The word 'oblates'⁵ might indicate that Bourdieu feels that he is kind of a layman living in, if not a religious, then an academic monastery under modified rules which exclude vows. Or does Bourdieu feel that he was an offering (*oblatus* meaning one offered up) sent to an academic monastery, namely the French élite system of education? Bourdieu's use of the word 'oblate' with its many meanings reflects his ambivalent position in the academic field both subjectively and objectively, as I wish to show later in this chapter.

Pierre Bourdieu as Homo Academicus

I will now try to outline some – to my mind – central features of the habitus of Pierre Bourdieu himself as *homo academicus*.

(1) *Stranger/Outsider*. Bourdieu himself strongly emphasises his position as a stranger (*étranger*) or outsider in French academic life. Some of his interviews are almost tragic in tone:

Most of the questions that I address to intellectuals [...] are no doubt rooted in the feeling of being a *stranger* in the intellectual universe. I question this world because it questions me [...] I never feel fully justified as an intellectual. I do not feel ‘at home’; I feel like I have to be answerable – to whom, I do not know – for what appears to me to be an unjustifiable privilege. (Bourdieu 1980a, 76; Wacquant’s translation; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 208–209, n170; cf. also Bourdieu 1989b, 15; Bourdieu 1993b, 47)

Thus, Bourdieu seems to feel that although being a member of the intellectual field through, among other things, his élite education, he does not want to be a member of the privileged ‘class’ of intellectuals. (Like Groucho Marx, he does not wish to join a club which would accept him as a member.) This is a kind of contradictory role he necessarily has, but he does not want to have.

When Bourdieu recalls his days at the École Normale Supérieure (ENS), it is quite obvious that he did not and does not feel comfortable in the French academic world, with the tribe and caste of ENS-trained philosophers – the École Normale of the 1950s (Bourdieu 1989b, 17–18). The root of his reaction would appear to go back to his humble social origins. In Bourdieu’s own words: ‘Throughout my studies at the École Normale, I felt formidably ill-at-ease’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 209).

While speaking of his role as a stranger Bourdieu does not refer to Albert Camus’s novel, rather his sense of being out of place is described by in Kafkaesque terms (Bourdieu 1993b, 47). Indeed one

gets the sense that he feels almost an existential – but not existentialist – angst. On occasions (Honneth et al. 1986a, 146–147; Bourdieu 1989b, 23; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 209) he mentions the French novelist and essayist Paul Nizán and Jean-Paul Sartre’s Foreword to Paul Nizán’s novel *Aden d’Arabie*. Nizán’s work describes his feelings when attending the École Normale on the rue d’Ulm in the late 1920s and provides a picture of the school’s *esprit des corps* (Nizán 1986, 60ff), characterising the École Normale as a ridiculous and hypocritical institution. In this context it is strange that Sartre in his Foreword to Nizán’s novel should characterise Nizán as an ‘English dandy’ of the École Normale (Sartre 1986, 19).⁶

(2) *Distance-taking*. Part of the role of a stranger⁷ is distance-taking. In Bourdieu’s auto-analysis of his studies at the École Normale he makes precisely this point:

[Coming from a distant province] endows you with a number of properties [...] It gives you a sort of objective and subjective externality and puts you in a particular relation to the central institutions of French society and therefore to the intellectual situation [...] It helps you to perceive things that others cannot see or feel, that is ‘social racism’. (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 209)

Bourdieu adds that in his attack on the École Normale one has ‘to be from the École Normale to write such things of the École Normale without appearing motivated by ressentiment’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 209). In this sense, according to Bourdieu, one should have a double role as both an insider and outsider (stranger), in order to not appear to bear a grudge against the École Normale when offering strong criticisms against it. The same obviously goes for the critique of the academic field.

One feature which is striking, at least to me, while reading Bourdieu’s texts is his extremely polemical, almost nonchalant, attitude towards most of the contemporary French philosophers, such as Jacques Derrida – with whom he has, however, agreed on a number

of political interventions (the most recent one known to me is their address for the rights of the ‘sans-papiers’, so-called illegal immigrants, published in *Libération*, 2 July 1998). Bourdieu has also criticised Derrida strongly in *La Distinction* (Bourdieu 1979; 1984a). Moreover, he has, in his own words: ‘an amused and somewhat ironic smile for Lyotard’ and ‘a loud silence concerning Baudrillard’ (Bourdieu 1996b, 146; cf. also Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 154). In the Preface to the English Edition of *Homo Academicus* (Bourdieu 1988, xviii) he is also at pains to point out that the French intellectuals like Althusser, Barthes, Deleuze, Derrida and Foucault who since the 1970s has been lionised in the USA, ‘held a marginal positions in the university system’ in France. – In this context it is good to keep in mind that the question is now about the academic field, the university system, not the whole French intellectual field, which only partly overlap.

Paradoxically, if one takes a closer look at Bourdieu’s *curriculum vitae*, one could also add Bourdieu’s name to the list of the intellectual heroes of the 1970s; and Bourdieu if anyone has himself emphasised his own marginal position. Unlike many French academics, Bourdieu has never submitted his *Thèse d’État* or *Habilitation*, and therefore has not been able to obtain a post as a ordinary university professor. Compare, for example, Deleuze and Foucault, who had submitted their doctoral theses quite early, or Althusser who defended his thesis in 1975. Bourdieu has the *agrégation* in philosophy – a university examination which qualifies the candidate to teach in a *lycée* and in certain university faculties (see Bourdieu et al. 1994) – which he received at the École Normale. He continued his studies at the Sorbonne, but did not follow the normal French academic route in order to gain a university professorship, which would have required a *Thèse d’État*. Years later Bourdieu explained this:

Today I can only laugh at my, officially encouraged, ambition at the age of twenty-five to re-establish if not the world as a whole then at least its intellectual part on totally new conceptual foundations; the

same goes for the inflated self-estimation and arrogance with which I rejected established academic disciplines and procedures, such as the *Thèse*. (Honneth et al. 1986b, 38)

At the Sorbonne under the guidance of Professor Henri Gouhier, historian of philosophy who is known for his studies on Comte, Bourdieu wrote a 'mémoire' on Leibniz as a critic of Descartes, which was a translation of Leibniz' *Animadversiones in partem generalem Principiorum Cartesianorum* from 1692 with a commentary. Bourdieu then obtained the *Diplôme d'études supérieures*, an examination equivalent to the *maîtrise* in contemporary France (Broadly 1990, 111; Honneth et al. 1986a, 143).

Hence, Pierre Bourdieu was basically educated in philosophy; he was a philosopher of the École Normale, like his slightly older schoolmates like Derrida and Alain Touraine. But Bourdieu intensely disliked the French philosophy of the 1950s. In particular the dominant philosophy of Sartrean existentialism revolted Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1989b, 20; for Sartre's position in the intellectual field, see Bourdieu 1980b). This is one reason why he converted via ethnology (cf. his fieldwork in Algeria in the late 1950s) to sociology, being more or less autodidact both in ethnology and sociology (Wacquant 1998; Honneth et al. 1986b, 39). This is also why Bourdieu has been criticised for ignoring sociological and methodological 'rules' in his analyses, i.e. his rather free and loose interpretation of data (e.g. *La Distinction* and *La Misère du monde*).

Significantly, as a self-taught student of sociology Bourdieu was not a member of any French sociological 'school' or a 'seminar', unlike most of the prominent contemporary sociologists influenced by, among other things, American post-war sociology. In this sense he has been a 'free-floating' sociologist, and this has perhaps helped develop the originality of his thinking.

According to Wacquant (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 211n174), Bourdieu's conversion from philosophy to sociology was also politically motivated:

[E]verything indicates that sociology and anthropology offered him [Bourdieu] a politically more efficacious and ethically more relevant intellectual vocation in the gruesome context of the war of Algerian independence than the abstract and ethereal debates of philosophy could.

All in all, it seems that Bourdieu's strong dislike of philosophy that continues even today derives from the 1950s. One could argue that Bourdieu's anti-philosophical standpoint goes back to his formative years at the École Normale; since then Bourdieu has quite obviously despised philosophers' fads and their flirtations with semiotics and other literary fields (e.g. the *Tel Quel* group). Generally speaking, he is very much against philosophy – with the exception of the so-called French epistemologists (Honneth et al. 1986a, 143), e.g. Gaston Bachelard and Georges Canguilhem (Bourdieu 1998b), and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. What Bourdieu wants to do is to 'unmask the illusory autonomy of the philosophical field', as he does with Derrida in *La Distinction*, and with Martin Heidegger in *The Political Ontology*. In *Homo Academicus* he does this not only with philosophy, but with the whole academic field.

Bourdieu's academic career is untypical, though not totally extraordinary, in the French field of *homines academici*. It is rather the *career of a researcher* than of a university professor, as has been pointed out by Donald Broady (1990, 113). In the early 1960s after his return from Algeria, Bourdieu taught for a while at the University of Lille, subsequently working as an assistant to Raymond Aron at the newly-formed Centre de sociologie européenne in the seventh section of the École pratique des hautes études (EPHE; nowadays known as École des hautes études en sciences sociales, EHESS). In 1964 he was nominated director of the Centre. Since 1964 has not had any university teaching position, for without a *habilitation* he was excluded from any higher university positions. But later in 1981, after having been outstandingly prolific for two decades, Bourdieu became something more than a university professor when

he became Aron's successor, occupying the Chair in sociology at the Collège de France, one of, if not the most prestigious scientific institutions in France.

What then was and is Bourdieu's place in the field of *homines academici*? One way to describe it is with the help of some graphs from his *Homo Academicus*. The first graph (Figure 1) developed by Bourdieu describes the basic dimensions or properties in the academic field of the arts and social science faculties in particular. It is based on the so-called analysis of correspondences⁸. The data itself is rather old, having been gathered in the 1970s (see Appendix 4 in Bourdieu 1988, 227–242). All the nuances of the complicated and sophisticated French academic system are not self-evident to a foreign reader, and it is impossible here to provide a complete guide to reading the graphs. I shall, however, try to give some basic coordinates. The 'main variables' in the case of the faculty of arts and social sciences were: Collège de France; Sorbonne; Nanterre; EPHE 6th section, etc.; joint post with CNRS directorship, etc.; date of birth; category of father; *Who's Who* (mention in); normalien (former student of the École Normale); agrégation board examiners, etc.; region of birth; number of children; Legion of Honour, etc.; residential neighbourhood; Academic Palms; *Le Nouvel Observateur* (writes for); book series 'Idées', 'Points', etc. (published in); translations; citations (*Citation Index*). 'Illustrative variables' (which were unreliable or redundant if combined with some other variable) included: place of birth; matrimonial status; the *agrégation* (insufficient and unreliable information); support for Giscard and so on (about the details see Appendix 4 in Bourdieu 1988, 271–276).



Figure 1.2 *The space of arts and social sciences: Analysis of correspondences – individuals (in Pierre Bourdieu's Homo Academicus). Source: Bourdieu 1988, 276.*

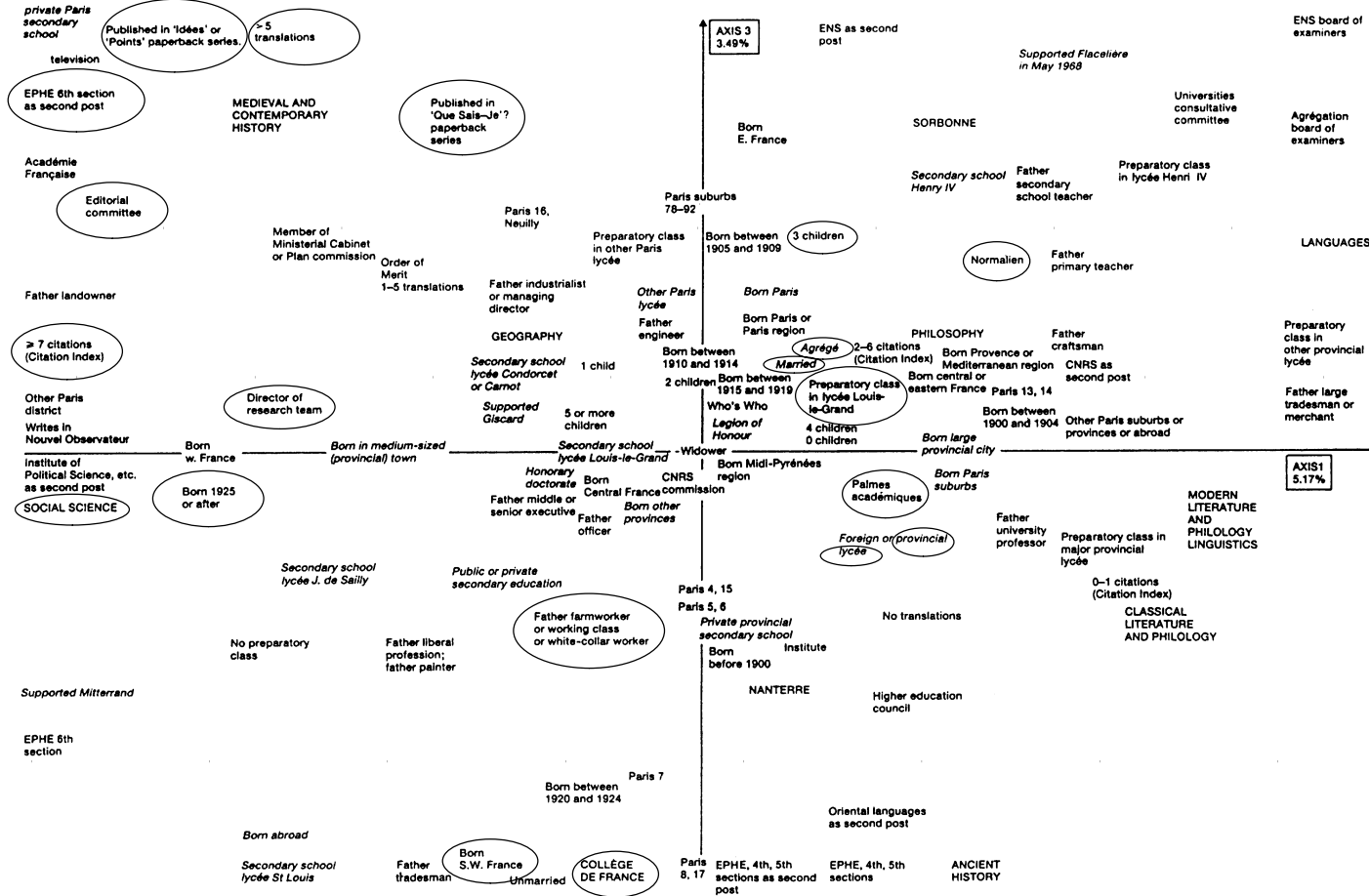


Figure 1.3 The space of arts and social sciences: Analysis of correspondences – Pierre Bourdieu's properties added (circled).

Even Bourdieu's own individual placement, among other academics, in the arts and social sciences was presented in *Homo Academicus*, although hidden at the very end of the book (Appendix 4; Bourdieu 1988, 276); it is reproduced here in Figure 2. From this figure one can see that Bourdieu's situation in the 1970s was still at some distance from the most prominent academic persons – though he was, so to say, in good company with Foucault and Derrida. This may be interpreted to mean that Bourdieu did have a kind of marginal position in those days. Figure 3 presents Bourdieu's 'properties' today. Those characteristics Bourdieu possesses nowadays have been circled (on the understanding that we do not have all the necessary information to give a complete picture of Bourdieu's position). As one can see, Bourdieu – according to the variables mentioned above – is a kind of 'anomaly'; his characteristics are more or less dispersed. In this sense he is not a 'typical' French academician, given the variables. The figures illustrate Bourdieu's academic dimensions. One thing is clear: Bourdieu would clearly now be placed near the most influential individuals in the arts and social sciences.

Bourdieu and his reflexive sociology: some conclusions

According to Bourdieu, each individual is nothing more or less than one variant of his or her class (habitus). This sounds quite straightforward, but it does not imply that with such a reductionist interpretation we could on the basis of one's social background or milieu draw direct conclusions concerning e.g. a writer's literary work. This was precisely what Bourdieu criticised Sartre for doing in his study of Flaubert wherein he sought explanations for the creation of *Madame Bovary* from Flaubert's life and social conditions (cf. Bourdieu 1992, 54, 263–269). Both social as well literary fields are much too complex; indeed, they have a logic of their own (cf. Broady 1998). Studying Flaubert's other classical novel *L'education*

sentimentale, Bourdieu seeks to unmask the ‘rules of art’, i.e. the invisible forces or conditions of human action, including the author and the work of art. Furthermore, he even believes that truth is contained in fiction, and that truth can be uncovered through the mask of ‘fiction’...

As mentioned above, Bourdieu contends that he is very much aware of his social position in the sociological meaning of the term: ‘I know precisely what position I occupy in social classifications’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 203). He also tells us that he is reluctant to speak about himself because it may be used against his sociological arguments, in order to relativise them. But he admits that ‘the concrete sociologist Pierre Bourdieu... can be objectified’ (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 203). And in a sense this is just what he has done when positioning himself as an objectified individual in the space of the academic field (cf. Figure 3).

Bourdieu himself strongly stresses his contradictory background: on the one hand his low social origins, born and raised in a small provincial village in Southwestern France (see Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 209), the son of a postman (Fowler 1997, 1) or ‘fonctionnaire’ (Bonnewitz 1997, 6); on the other, the product of the French élite school system, through taking preparatory classes in Lycée Louis-le-Grand in Paris and then studying at the prestigious École Normale (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 203). In a centralised metropolitan country like France such a step was a long one to take for a boy from provinces. No wonder he felt both class and spatial marginality, coupled with his personal experience of the oppressive colonial rule in Algeria during his military service in the French army.

Even today in the nineties Bourdieu says he feels himself to be a stranger, as he has since he came to study in Paris. If one takes a closer look at his career, one can see that throughout his career he has not only felt like a stranger but has also actively distanced himself from many things, converting from philosophy to sociology,

for example. But for a foreign observer, looking at Bourdieu's position in France from the outside, all this – however true his subjective feelings might be – seems quite contradictory, as we know that Bourdieu has a very strong and celebrated position in France, both institutionally (Collège de France) and intellectually (best-selling books, theme issues, e.g. the journal *Critique* 1995, media publicity, etc.). Among other things, in 1993 he received the golden medal of the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS) – the highest distinction in French research, and the first time it was given to a sociologist (Devillairs 1996, 175); he is also a member of the American Academy of Sciences and has received the Goethe Prize and the Ernst Bloch Prize in Germany. His books have also been translated into numerous languages. On the other hand, it seems to be very typical for French intellectuals that they stress their extremely individual role in the intellectual field – that, of course, can be understood thinking about Bourdieu's life's course from the remote mountain village in Southwestern France to the very top of French highbrow culture. On the backcover of Bourdieu's latest book *La Domination masculine* (Bourdieu 1998c), his academic coordinates, which obviously he himself authorised, are given quite simply: anthropologist, sociologist, professor at the Collège de France, and research director of the École des hautes études en sciences sociales.

But Bourdieu has self-conscious marginal role in another sense too: he purposefully takes critical distance to the power centres of academic life in France; being – and somehow, it seems, even enjoying being – on the margin. Bourdieu has developed several of his own collective projects (the journal *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, book series *Liber*, *Raisons d'agir*, etc.). Although this distinguished sociologist is not a person who wants to publicise himself in the spotlight of the media, quite recently Bourdieu has become politically very active, and has developed himself into a new sort of intellectual – a 'collective intellectual' (Bourdieu 1998a)

who is ‘militant-scientific’, a new combination of Sartrean engagement (‘total intellectual’, criticised by Bourdieu 1992, 293–297) and Foucauldian specific intellectual, i.e. scientific expert. This collective intellectual, Bourdieu hopes, would be both international and interdisciplinary. In the mid-1990s Bourdieu has started his ‘one man’s war’, particularly against neo-liberal tendencies and against ‘symbolic violence’ in general, and he has fought for the ‘European welfare state’ as well as for several social movements, for the rights of strikers, illegal immigrants, homosexuals, and so on (see Bourdieu 1998a and 1998f).

This new militant role Bourdieu has himself already outlined quite clearly (Honneth et al. 1986a, 163; 1986b, 51):

It seems to me that the time of the intellectual as *prophet* has passed, and I further believe that we cannot accept the role as experts in solving problems of management either. It should be possible to reconcile science and militancy and return intellectuals to the role of ‘militants of reason’ they occupied in the eighteenth century.

Bourdieu’s programme of the ‘Politics of Reason’ (Honneth et al. 1986b, 51) – which goes back further than to the Dreyfus affair (Zola) to the Enlightenment tradition of the eighteenth century – is interconnected to his reflexive sociology in many ways. Bourdieu’s feelings of being a stranger, or being on the margin, are well illustrated by Bourdieu’s resistant attitude when coming to the Collège de France, which were transferred into his writings on reflexive sociology. To quote some further autobiographic remarks by Bourdieu:

By undertaking a reflection on what I was experiencing, I sought a degree of freedom from what was happening [...] to do sociology of intellectuals, to do sociology of the Collège de France, of what it means to deliver an inaugural lecture at the Collège de France, at the very moment when you are taken in and by the game, is to assert that you are *trying to be free from it*. For me, sociology has played the role of a socioanalysis that has helped me to understand and tolerate things (beginning with my self) that I found unbearable before. (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 210)

As one might think that seeing everything in terms of games or fields might lead to cynicism, Bourdieu talks about two ways of reading the intellectual and social world: 'I continually strive to discourage cynical readings and encourage clinical ones' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 211). Bourdieu also speaks about his reflexive sociology being his 'self-therapy' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 211f).

Finally, as a conclusion, I would like to take up one somewhat paradoxical point of Bourdieu's thinking, which I have already alluded to. Namely, on the one hand, Bourdieu (in his *Distinction*) dismisses the idea of Immanuel Kant's reflexive (pure) aesthetics which is supposedly disinterested on the basis of his 'vulgar' sociological critique; on the other hand, he develops his own reflexive sociology, to my mind, like a 'Münchhausen trick', a sociology that is free of interests, or apparently disinterested:

I believe that sociology, when it is reflexive, enables us to track down and to destroy the last germs of resentment [...] Sociology frees you from this kind of sickly strategy of symbolic inversion because it compels you to ask: Do I not write because [...] Resentment is for me the form *par excellence* of human misery; it is the worst thing that the dominant impose on the dominated (perhaps the major privilege of the dominant, in any social universe, is to be structurally freed from resentment). Thus, for me, sociology is an instrument of liberation and therefore of *generosity*. (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 212)

Thus, Bourdieu's reflexive sociology seems to have not only a therapeutic function, but also a strong socio-political function. And I would like to add that this is Bourdieu's own version of 'pure' sociology which, as we have seen, becomes more comprehensible in the light of his biography.

With Bourdieu there are heterogeneous elements which as a result imply a special intellectual type à la Bourdieu that is genetically not the same kind of intellectual as Zola's classical type; social

(lowly born from a periphery; a stranger at the top of the academic élite; as unprivileged he is privileged), theoretical (conversion from philosophy to sociology; his reflexive sociology as self-therapeutic and self-freeing from ressentiment), and as an end-result of Bourdieu's 'unpure' career: a militant-scientific intellectual. It almost looks like others can follow Bourdieu only by linking to Bourdieu's programme of the contemporary intellectual, the 'collective intellectual' who is both interdisciplinary and international.

As to Bourdieu's sociology, briefly, it has a double-character: firstly, inwards it has a therapeutic-self-freeing function (freed from ressentiment and class interests, and hence generous to itself); secondly, outwards it is militant-scientific (rigorous, and not so generous to others, though perhaps more generous to the 'dominated'). Bourdieu's sociology can be characterised as both generous and rigorous. (I shall return to this topic in the following chapter when discussing Bourdieu and Nietzsche.)

In the end, it seems to me that Bourdieu cannot escape the classical problem of 'a free-floating intellectual' à la Karl Mannheim. In effect, Bourdieu himself ends up in the position of a free-floating intellectual, no matter how scientific-sociological his motivations and legitimations that he gives are. In general, I think this is unavoidable; no other sociologist escapes from it from the same dilemma either.

All in all, I have here been trying to 'deduce' some things about the sociologist Bourdieu from the knowledge he has of his own position and of what he writes. I hope I have at least, in a tentative sense, been able to show that there is a clear connection between Bourdieu's thinking – that is his reflexive sociology as well as his programme as an intellectual – and his intellectual biography, if not his 'background variables'. In this way I believe we can gain a better, though not uncritical, understanding of Bourdieu's sociology.

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2

Taste as a Struggle: Bourdieu and Nietzsche

The sociologist's privilege, if he has one, is not that of trying to be suspended above those whom he classifies, but that of knowing that he is classified and knowing roughly where he stands in the classifications. When people who think they will win an easy revenge ask me what are my tastes in paintings or music, I reply, quite seriously: those that correspond to my place in the classification. (Bourdieu 1980a, 72; English translation: Bourdieu 1993b, 44–45)

In this chapter I present a comparison which sociologically might be a little surprising: I compare Pierre Bourdieu's and Friedrich Nietzsche's conceptions of taste. My thesis is that there is an interesting resemblance between Bourdieu and Nietzsche in matters of taste as well as a struggle for power, resentment and more generally of power ('the will to power'). With the help of this comparison I wish to explicate some aspects of Bourdieu's thinking. Notice the order of my *personae dramatis*: Bourdieu and Nietzsche; this alludes to the fact that I am more interested in what lies behind Bourdieu's concepts of taste and power than Nietzsche as a philosopher. So I am reading Nietzsche above all from a sociological viewpoint.

Pierre Bourdieu's taste

Sociologically there has been no dispute about taste before Pierre Bourdieu. I think one can with good cause argue that Bourdieu's *Distinction* (published in 1979) and its preliminary studies already

in the 1960s (Bourdieu et al. 1965, Bourdieu et al. 1966 and Bourdieu 1968) are the first attempts to provide a radically sociological interpretation of taste. Although Max Weber's remarks about 'stylisation of life', Georg Simmel's studies on fashion and 'Vornehmheit', or 'distinction' as Tom Bottomore and David Frisby have translated it in Simmel's *Philosophy of Money* (Simmel 1990), Thorstein Veblen's theory of 'conspicuous consumption' plus Norbert Elias' interpretation of the 'civilisation process' touch on the question of taste, none of them dealt with taste quite explicitly or systematically. Taste has been studied and commented on mainly in the fields of aesthetics, philosophy and art history. For example, at the end of the 1960s in the *International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* the article on taste (Wenzel 1968) treats taste – together with smell – only as a physico-chemical phenomenon. In this sense I think it is quite legitimate to characterise – as Loïc Wacquant does – Bourdieu's *Distinction* as a 'Copernican revolution' in the study of taste (Wacquant 1993, 663).

Generally speaking, Bourdieu extends Durkheim's programme as he argues that '[t]here exists a correspondence between social structure and mental structures' (Bourdieu 1989c, 7; Wacquant 1992, 12–14) or a homology – and simultaneously converts or transforms Immanuel Kant's third critique, i.e. *Kritik der Urteilskraft* into a sociology (or a 'sociology of aesthetics' as Hans-Peter Müller calls it; Müller 1992a, 300).

For Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1984a), taste is one of the main battlefields in the cultural reproduction and legitimating of power. Taste is the field of concealed exercise of power; it is a 'matter of course', the 'natural difference' that has grown apart from the social. Attempts at a sociological explanation of these self-evident relations, notes Bourdieu, are usually denounced as pointless by people who have something to gain in mystifying the relation between taste and education (or some other social factors).

Bourdieu sees everyday life as a constant struggle over the final

word in determining what is ‘good’ taste, a taste that at the same time is ‘universal’. This struggle is a cultural game that no one can escape: ‘...taste is the basis of all that one has – people and things – and all that one is for others, whereby one classifies oneself and is classified by others’ (Bourdieu 1984a, 56). For Bourdieu there are three different kinds (*univers*) of taste, which ‘roughly correspond to educational levels and social classes’ (Bourdieu 1984a, 16). At its best, these different ‘universes’ or distinctions manifest themselves in the field of music, which Bourdieu gives as a good example (see Bourdieu 1984a, 13–18).

The first universe of taste is the pure taste, i.e., the taste whose cultural objects are ‘legitimate’, i.e. so-called ‘highbrow culture’. This kind of taste is most often found in those factions of the dominant class who have the greatest educational capital. The second taste is the ‘average’ taste (*le goût ‘moyen’*), directed to more common and less valuable objects. And finally, the third taste is the ‘popular’ or vulgar taste, which is represented by objects which lack all artistic ambition (e.g. ‘pop culture’). This kind of taste is spontaneously like an ‘anti-Kantian aesthetic’; it is ‘barbaric’ in the very sense that Kant gave it (Kant 1966, 99; in English: Kant 1987, 69; § 13; cf. Bourdieu 1984a, 41–43). In the third taste there is still another important feature: that is, a self-exclusion of this third taste outside ‘taste’ itself. It does not (re)present itself as a taste at all – except in the specific case of artistic aestheticisation of kitsch, but then it moves to the side of good taste or ‘avant-garde’. As the Rolling Stones put it briefly and pithily: ‘It’s only rock ‘n roll (but I like it)’.

Correspondingly, Bourdieu distinguishes three general attitudes or ‘dispositions’ towards culture, each connected to a given class position. The dominant class has a ‘sense of distinction’; the middle class (the ‘new petty bourgeoisie’) has ‘cultural goodwill’ (*bonne volonté culturelle*); the lower classes (*classes populaires*) are left with the ‘necessary choice’. The dominant class, says Bourdieu,

strives to distinguish itself from those representing other taste categories: the line of demarcation runs between the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ or ‘barbarian’ taste. Which distinction is most refined at any moment of time is defined by the avant-garde. At the stage where popular taste finally comes to embrace what used to be good taste, taste has turned from ‘pure’ to ‘vulgar’. This mechanism thus appears to bear a certain resemblance to Georg Simmel’s description of fashion (Simmel 1983), although Bourdieu makes no reference to Simmel in his *Distinction*.

Bourdieu’s critique of Kant

As the Kant-sounding subtitle of Bourdieu’s *Distinction: Critique sociale du jugement* (in the English translation¹ the word ‘taste’ has been added to the subtitle: *A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*) indicates, the book is a direct critique – a ‘vulgar critique’ as Bourdieu himself puts it – of Immanuel Kant’s aesthetics, i.e. Kant’s *Critique of Judgement* (Kant 1966; in English Kant 1987). It is a social or sociological critique of judgements. (Here I shall ignore the critical remarks made about Bourdieu’s critique of Kant, e.g. Crowther 1994 and Fowler 1994, as here I do not aim to evaluate the validity of Bourdieu’s critique of Kant itself.)

I think it is important to bear in mind that Bourdieu’s ‘vulgar’ (read: sociological) critique thus goes beyond Enlightenment philosophy; indeed, it takes a stand against it, while at the same time it questions the universality of judgement. However, Bourdieu does not take a stand in favour of ‘vulgar’ taste – which would lead to a sociological version of ‘prolet-cult’ or ‘proletarian science’.

When, according to Kant, an aesthetic judgement anticipates ‘common sense’ (*sensus communis*) – or a kind of aesthetic community (about *sensus communis* see also Lyotard 1991) – a judgement shared by everyone (Kant 1966; Kant 1987, § 40; cf. also Gronow 1997 and Müller 1992b), Bourdieu transforms this aesthetic

community into a social community, or rather a social field. More generally, Scott Lash calls it a 'reflexive community' (Lash 1994, 161).

To put it roughly, a judgement or an aesthetic sense is according to Bourdieu nothing but a socially determined judgement. Thus Kant's antinomy concerning the principle of taste – i.e. that taste is both subjective and objective and universal – is twisted by Bourdieu into becoming a social antinomy: a taste which represents itself both as subjective and universal corresponds in fact to one's objective social position. And this is just what Bourdieu criticises Kant for having neglected. Bourdieu's theory of distinction is not, however, a simple sociology of class and it was never meant to be, as Bourdieu strongly emphasises (see Bourdieu 1989a, 407–409), although at first sight it seems to be and has even been claimed to be a 'sociological reduction'. It is a special 'reflexive sociology' (cf. the title of Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992: *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*), which aims to say ambitiously something more about the unconscious or even about the ontology of habitus and practices, i.e. about what has not been thought – to uncover the 'unthought' (*impensée*; cf. Lash 1994, 153–155).

At the end of his *Distinction* Bourdieu presents a systematic critique of Kant under the title: *Postscript: Towards a 'Vulgar' Critique of 'Pure' Critiques* (Bourdieu 1984a, 485–500). At the same time he polemizes against Jacques Derrida's 'pure' reading of Kant (Derrida 1978), as well. He criticises Derrida for taking a position both inside and outside of the game (something that to my mind Bourdieu himself also does in his own manner). Bourdieu (1984a, 499–500) writes:

In short, the philosophical sense of distinction is another form of the visceral disgust at vulgarity which defines pure taste as an internalized social relationship, a social relationship made flesh, and a philosophically distinguished reading of the *Critique of Judgement* cannot be expected to uncover the social relationship at the heart of a

work that is rightly regarded as the very symbol of philosophical distinction.

The pure, ‘disinterested’ taste is distance-taking: it ‘asserts the absolute primacy of form over function’ (Bourdieu 1984a, 30 and 56). Yet what is even more crucial for Bourdieu is that taste – ‘i.e., manifested preferences’ (Bourdieu 1984a, 56) – is determined by negation, i.e., by disgust:

In matters of taste, more than anywhere else, all determination is negation; and tastes are perhaps first and foremost distastes, disgust provoked by horror or visceral intolerance (‘sick-making’) of the tastes of others. ‘De gustibus non est disputandum’: not because ‘tout les goûts sont dans la nature’, but because each taste feels itself to be natural – and so it almost is, being a habitus – which amounts to rejecting others as unnatural and therefore vicious. (Bourdieu 1984a, 56)

According to Bourdieu, Kant’s principle of pure taste is ‘nothing other than a refusal, a disgust – a disgust for objects which impose enjoyment and a disgust for the crude, vulgar taste which revels in this imposed enjoyment’ (Bourdieu 1984a, 488).

It is interesting that Jean Baudrillard, one of those French ‘essayists’ whom Bourdieu despised (see Bourdieu 1988, xvi–xxvi, 279), stresses disgust à la Bourdieu, although Baudrillard – à la Baudrillard indeed – stretches his thesis further to the end of tastes:

Nowadays, only dislike [dégoût] is determined, tastes do not come into it any more... The only source of what is beautiful and of renewal in fashion is ugly. (Baudrillard 1986, 5–6)²

Taste and power

On a more general level, then, what lies behind Bourdieu’s own thinking is his sociology of power or symbolic power, of which taste is only one, although an important case among others (as in the academic field; cf. *Homo Academicus*). As Loïc Wacquant, one of

Bourdieu's closest colleagues and interpreters (cf. Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992 and Bourdieu & Wacquant 1998), puts it:

Classes and other antagonistic social collectives are continually engaged in a struggle to impose the definition of the world that is most congruent with their particular interests. The sociology of knowledge or of cultural forms is *eo ipso* a political sociology, that is, a sociology of symbolic power. (Wacquant 1992, 14)

Struggles for (good) taste are (symbolic) struggles for power. And this is even true of truth itself: '...if there is a truth, it is that truth is the stake of struggles (*enjeu des luttes*)' (Bourdieu 1990, 297).

There is still one concept of Bourdieu that is important in this context, and it is his concept of 'field' (*champ*). With the help of the notion of 'field of power' Bourdieu wants to avoid the problematic 'substantialist' concept of the 'ruling class' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 76n 16; cf. Bourdieu 1989c, 373–427). Bourdieu has given, to my mind, the most explicit definition of this notion in his unpublished lecture given in English, 'The field of power' (University of Wisconsin at Madison, April 1989):

The field of power is a *field of forces* defined by the structure of the existing balance of forces between forms of power, or between different species of capital... It is also simultaneously a *field of struggle for power among the holders of different forms of power*. It is a space of play and competition... The field of power is organised as a chiasmatic structure: the distribution according to the dominant principle of hierarchization (economic capital) is inversely symmetrical to the distribution according to the dominated principle of hierarchization (cultural capital). (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 76n 16)

For Bourdieu the field is, indeed, a central concept. Concerning the notion of field he stresses the point that the field is a 'system of objective forces' like a magnetic field, but sociology is not, however, 'social physics' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 17 and 100n 52). Bourdieu's idea of field as well as the game (*jeu*) analogy go

back to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's notion of field. But contrary to Bourdieu's concept of field (*champ*), Merleau-Ponty's notion does not have a theoretical status; it simply denotes the sports field (*terrain*; Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 22n 39). Bourdieu emphasises a difference between a game and a field:

We can indeed, with caution, compare a field to a game (*jeu*) although, unlike the latter, a field is not the product of a deliberate act of creation, and it follows rules or, better, regularities, that are not explicit and codified. (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 98)

The game itself is more like (social) poker than roulette – although both of them demand a certain amount of (social, economic, cultural) capital, poker demands accumulation and strategies plus a 'poker face' (*habitus*?).

Above I referred to Lash's interpretation of Bourdieu's reflexive sociology and field as a 'reflexive community'. For Lash, behind Bourdieu's sociology there is a sociology of the unconscious – the unconscious of not only tastes but of habits and practices, and on the whole the examination of those categories and suppositions which we do not think or have not thought about (Lash 1994, 153). Bourdieu's sociology of unconscious has had an influence on so-called reflexive anthropology, which denounces objectivism, the realism of Lévi-Strauss and functionalism. It means learning and knowing through *habitus* (which has the same root as the French verb '*habiter*'). And truth is neither conceptual nor mimetic; it manifest itself in shared practices. Lash claims that Bourdieu operates 'in a fully different terrain than [...] aesthetic (Adorno, Nietzsche) reflexivity' (Lash 1994, 156).

Correspondingly, according to Lash, Bourdieu's 'fields' are not filled with structures, agents, discourses nor subjects or objects but with habits, unconscious and bodily practices and 'categories of the unthought' (Lash 1994, 166). What is struggled over by classes and class factions are the kind of background assumptions, such as

habits and tastes (which Lash – not Bourdieu – calls ‘the ontological foundations of ideology’). From Bourdieu’s viewpoint – following Lash’ argumentation – it is not class as a collective actor, but class as a collective habitus and as a ‘form of life’, which is doing the struggle. A class conceived in this sense is not an organised actor with conscious aspirations. The question is about the ‘logic of practices’, which does not take place through institutional organizations but through shared meanings and habits. These meanings and habits are not structures at all, says Lash (1994, 166).

Power and ressentiment

In this context, I would like to take up one more rather paradoxical point of Bourdieu’s thinking. Namely, on the one hand Bourdieu dismisses the idea of Kant’s reflexive, pure aesthetics on the basis of his ‘vulgar’ sociological critique; on the other hand he develops his own reflexive sociology, to my mind, like a ‘Münchhausian trick’, that is, he posits a sociology which is disinterested and free of interests. Bourdieu writes:

I believe that sociology, when it is reflexive, enables us to track down and to destroy the last germs of ressentiment. [...] Sociology frees you from this kind of sickly strategy of symbolic inversion because it compels you to ask: Do I not write because... Isn’t the root of my revolt, my irony, my sarcasm, of the rhetorical vibration of my adjectives when I describe Giscard d’Estaing playing tennis [Bourdieu refers to his *Distinction*] the fact that, deep down, I envy what he is? Ressentiment is for me the form par excellence of human misery; it is the worst thing that the dominant impose on the dominated (perhaps the major privilege of the dominant, in any social universe, is to be structurally freed from ressentiment). Thus, for me, sociology is an instrument of liberation and therefore of *generosity*. (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 212)

As to Bourdieu’s Münchhausian trick – significantly, one of his ‘intellectual heroes’ is Karl Kraus (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 212) –

it is apparent in the citation above that Bourdieu presents his own version of disinterested, ‘pure’ sociology. Reflexive sociology, which is sociology of knowledge and power, shows that nothing – including aesthetics – is disinterested except sociology. As a sociologist Bourdieu does not think that he stands above all classifications (cf. the motto of this chapter above), but his sociology does not take a stand in favour of any class. Free from resentment he can afford to look at things disinterestedly, from the viewpoint of truth, i.e. scientifically and reflexively. And one can find this programme of Bourdieu realised *in concreto* in his gigantic project on ‘the misery of the world’, *La Misère du monde* (Bourdieu et al. 1993). In a manner of speaking, Bourdieu is a ‘positivist’ in two senses of the term: firstly, he gives his reflexive sociology the status of a king among sciences; secondly, he presents his own extensive research programme for empirical sociology.

In an interview on his book *Homo Academicus* Bourdieu formulates perhaps his most explicit standpoint concerning the (sociological) truth which we find in our objective situations. It is also his most explicit anti-autobiographic statement (cf. Bourdieu 1986):

[T]he most intimate truth about what we are, the most unthinkable unthought [*impensée*], is inscribed in the objectivity, and in the history, of the social positions that we held in the past and that we presently occupy. (Bourdieu 1989d, 25)

Yet it is unclear how sociology in Bourdieu’s sense of the word is able to avoid this reduction back to social positions and how it is able to stand outside this objectivity, nevertheless, as a ‘free-floating’ sociology. In any case, Bourdieu believes in the disinterested sociology which is not beyond good and evil nor beyond truth and untruth (Bourdieu’s personal communication to the author, 22 June 1993).

Friedrich Nietzsche's taste

Le goût philosophique ne remplace pas la création ni ne la modère, c'est au contraire la création des concepts qui fait appel à un goût qui la module. Le libre création de concepts déterminés a besoin d'un goût du concept indéterminé. Le goût est cette puissance, cet être-en-puissance du concept [...] Nietzsche a pressenti ce rapport de la création des concepts avec un goût proprement philosophique [...]. (Deleuze & Guattari 1991, 76)

Although I state that there is an interesting 'family resemblance' – although not in the strict Wittgensteinian sense – between Bourdieu and Nietzsche in questions like power, taste and knowledge, I certainly do not want to argue that, in fact, in the case of Bourdieu everything goes back to Nietzsche. Actually, Bourdieu makes here and there in his work references to Nietzsche, but none of them, e.g. in *La Distinction*, is relevant to the question of taste. So, in this sense one cannot say that Bourdieu is Nietzschean. But what I want to argue is that in Bourdieu's thinking there are some interesting elements which are similar to Nietzsche's conception of taste as well as power. As such it is not a novel idea that Nietzsche has had an influence on the history of sociology, rather the opposite: Nietzsche had a clear influence e.g. on the German classics of sociology: Tönnies (who later became a critic of Nietzsche), Simmel and Weber (see e.g. Lichtblau 1984; Turner 1992). As the phrase goes: they were all 'sociologists after Nietzsche'.

On the other hand, traditionally Nietzsche has not been included in the classics of sociology. In this sense it is interesting that in the *American Journal of Sociology* an article (Antonio 1995) has quite recently appeared – perhaps for the first time in the 100-year history of *AJS* – dealing with the absence of Nietzsche from sociological theory, especially in the United States. In Germany and France, Nietzsche's influence is better known, e.g. Louis Pinto's analysis of the reception of Nietzsche in France (Pinto 1995; see also Goldman 1993), though Pinto has nothing to say about Bourdieu's relation to Nietzsche.

As to Nietzsche, it is quite difficult to speak about his conception of taste – although Deleuze and Guattari above say that Nietzsche had a ‘philosophical taste’. Firstly, Nietzsche’s style is anything but systematic, it is fragmented and aphoristic (cf. Deleuze 1965; Nehemas 1985). Secondly, as far as I know, no study has been written on Nietzsche’s ‘philosophy of taste’.³

Nietzsche occasionally refers to taste in his books (e.g., *Beyond Good and Evil*, *The Gay Science*, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, *Nietzsche Contra Wagner*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and the so-called *Will to Power*, i.e. his *Nachlaß* of the 1880s), and always in his individual aphoristic way of speaking. One can, after all, find much more material about power than taste in Nietzsche’s literary production.

The key quotation of Nietzsche – which I think could serve as a motto for Bourdieu’s *Distinction* – comes from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (‘Of the Sublime Men’):

And do you tell me, friends, that there is no dispute over taste and tasting? But all life is dispute over taste and tasting!

Taste: that is at the same time weight and scales and weigher; and woe to all living creatures that want to live without dispute over weight and scales and weigher! (Nietzsche 1961, 140)⁴

In the above quotation one can see that Nietzsche sees ‘all life’ as a dispute about taste, and, says Nietzsche, one should not contest this statement, but accept and admit it (*Bejahung*), and live with this fact. From the above, one might say that Bourdieu agrees with Nietzsche to a large extent in considering taste to be a perpetual struggle in modern society.⁵ For both of them it is ‘eternal’ (*ewig*) and everlasting, as there is no reconciliation in this dispute.

Nietzsche and Bourdieu

It is a well-known fact that Nietzsche, like Bourdieu, is clearly anti-Kantian. In his *Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche attacks Kant's aesthetic conception, especially the 'predicates of beauty': non-personality and universality (*Prädikaten des Schönen, Unpersönlichkeit, Allgemeingültigkeit*). Nietzsche despises, along with Schopenhauer, Kant's definition of 'beautiful' as something that pleases audiences in a disinterested fashion (*ohne Interesse*).⁶

You cannot watch 'without interest', says Nietzsche; it would be absurd. For Nietzsche it is Kant's fundamental mistake to look at aesthetics from the viewpoint of the spectator (*Zuschauer*) and to include the spectator in the concept of 'beautiful'. Nietzsche confronts Kant with the 'experiences of the artist (the creator)' (*Er-fahrungen des Künstlers (des Schaffenden)*). Such a viewpoint is that of a real 'spectator' and artist (*ein wirklicher 'Zuschauer' und Artist*), and Nietzsche prefers Stendhal's definition of beautiful as 'une promesse de bonheur' to Kant's disinterestedness. Interestingly enough, Bourdieu quotes just from this section of Nietzsche's Kant-critique sympathetically, in his *Le Sens pratique* (Bourdieu 1980c, 58).

In *The Gay Science* (First book, chapter 39; Nietzsche 1963, 64f) Nietzsche deals with the change of common taste (*allgemein Geschmack*). He considers the change of taste to be more important than the change of opinion, which is only a symptom of changed tastes. How does taste then change? According to Nietzsche, tastes change when influential people state their own opinions and carry them into effect. – Thus, when they say that this is ridiculous and that is absurd, their judgements are dictated by their own taste and disgust. They subordinate many people under a force which little by little becomes a habit for an increasingly large number of people, and finally becomes a universal need.⁷ Nietzsche's interpretation of changing of tastes is rather unsubtle, but it includes similar elements

to ones we can find in Bourdieu's analysis, e.g. the implementation of the 'legitimate taste' by the dominant faction, and especially the manifestation of taste judgements through negation and disgust.

Nietzsche writes: 'sie legen damit vielen einen Zwang auf, aus dem allmählich eine Gewöhnung noch mehrere und zuletzt ein *Bedürfnis aller* wird.' If we interpret 'Zwang' (coercion) sociologically as an abstract social pressure, Nietzsche's conception is not so far from Bourdieu's one, neither are 'habit' (*Gewöhnung*) and 'need' (*Bedürfnis*) far from Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and practices. Furthermore, Nietzsche sees that individuals sense and taste differently because of their way of life: in short because of their bodies.⁸ Correspondingly, Bourdieu sees a social class as a collective habitus and lifestyle which is articulated bodily, *fait corps* (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 149), and even physiologically (cf. Simmel: *Nasenfrage*). According to Nietzsche aesthetic and moral judgements are the 'finest tunes' of the body ('*feinste Töne*' der *Physis*). In his *Distinction* Bourdieu refers to Nietzsche (his so-called *Will to Power*) and speaks about 'body language' (*langage corporel*) of class habitus (Bourdieu 1984a, 177). In another connection, he borrows from Marcel Mauss and states: 'Language is a technique of the body' (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 149).

Despite the clear differences between Bourdieu's and Nietzsche's viewpoints, their understanding of the social determination of taste comes surprisingly close to each other. Of course, Bourdieu's interpretation is sociologically-speaking more sophisticated.

As to the case of resentment, Bourdieu's and Nietzsche's opinions are also quite convergent. When Bourdieu deals with his reflexive sociology and resentment, he refers directly to Nietzsche:

Ressentiment is not, as with Scheler [Bourdieu refers to Max Scheler's book *Ressentiment*] (who wrote truly awful things about resentment), synonymous with the hatred of the dominant experienced by the dominated. It is rather, as Nietzsche, who coined the term, suggested, the sentiment of the person who transforms a socio-

logically mutilated being – I am poor, I am black, I am a woman, I am powerless – into a model of human excellence, an elective accomplishment of freedom and a *devoir-être*, an ought-to-be, a *fatum*, built upon an unconscious fascination with the dominant. (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, 212)

And it was just this freedom from resentment that empowered Bourdieu's generous, disinterested sociology.

But what about Nietzsche's 'will to power' (*Wille zur Macht*), which has produced forth so many misunderstandings? At first glance it does not seem to connect Nietzsche with Bourdieu. As the opposite of the 'will to power' Nietzsche ridicules the 'bad taste' of philosophy, its 'will to truth' (...*dieser schlechte Geschmack, dieser Wille zur Wahrheit, dieser Jünglings-Wahnsinn in der Liebe zur Wahrheit*; Nietzsche 1967c, 487; see also Nietzsche 1967d, 16; 1967b, 286–287).

Dealing with the will to power, in his *Nachlaß* of the 1880s (the posthumous *Will to Power*)⁹ Nietzsche makes an interesting distinction between 'strong' and 'weak forces' and 'times'. 'Strong people' does not mean those in power, neither does the will to power denote greed for power as Gilles Deleuze (1965, 70–77) has pointed out. 'Strong people' act and create; 'weak' react according to their resentments. In Bourdieu's *Distinction* the lower classes and the 'new petty bourgeoisie' supposedly react in similar fashions to the distinctions made by the dominant faction.

And is it sheer coincidence that *Der Wille zur Macht* is translated into French as *La Volonté de puissance* (Deleuze 1965, 89)? It has an obvious influence on Michel Foucault's history of sexuality: *La Volonté de savoir* (Foucault 1976), and perhaps on Bourdieu's concept of 'good cultural will' (*bonne volonté culturelle*)?

For Nietzsche, the viewpoint of a creative artist (cf. Nietzsche's critique of Kant above) is also his personal artistic program – is this also true for Bourdieu's reflexive sociology? Or perhaps at his point there is a genuine difference between Nietzsche and Bourdieu?

Nietzsche's programme is to act as an individual avant-garde, and to create, among other things, taste and new values, instead of judging them (this is something which Nietzsche calls 'women's aesthetics'¹⁰). On the other hand, in his discussion with Hans Haacke Bourdieu himself gives the artist a special status: above all an artist has a specific competence, namely to cause a sensation and to express something that scientific research is not able to say (Bourdieu & Haacke 1994, 36).

Since Kant and his criticism has deprived us of our right for interpretation, says Nietzsche (1966, 489 and 484), it is essential that the will to power interprets, outlines (*er grenzt ab*) and defines grades (*Graden*) and power differences (*Machtverschiedenheiten*). Although both Nietzsche and Bourdieu criticise Kant, for Nietzsche the will to power is affirmative and positive (*Bejahung*), saying 'yes to life', as Michel Maffesoli has said (Maffesoli 1993)¹¹. Bourdieu, however, is critical, seeing it as something negative, although in a sense productive, but not as Nietzsche saw it, producing values, nor as Foucault saw it, producing knowledge. Furthermore, the 'good cultural will', which is typical for the 'new petty bourgeoisie', is a more descriptive term in Bourdieu's writing.

Nietzsche's thought was not only anti-Kantian, it was also anti-sociological (Lichtblau 1984, 236–238). For Nietzsche nineteenth century sociology in France and England (especially 'Herr Herbert Spencer') represented the spirit of decadence and general mediocrity (Nietzsche 1967e, 381). Behind decadence and mediocrity was the process of Western rationalisation that meant narrowing class differences, the birth of the 'social question' (*soziale Frage*), and along with it the growth of the socialist movement – all of them decadent phenomena.

Nietzsche's anti-sociology was a moral and cultural critique. It was a kind of 'positive counter-sociology', and his radical thought made a strong impact on German sociology, particularly on Simmel (Lichtblau 1984, 238). Nietzsche's counter-sociology was an aristo-

cratic and affirmative ‘pathos of distance’. The description of this phenomenon is, as such, not so far from Bourdieu’s analysis, if one compares Bourdieu with what Nietzsche writes in *Beyond Good and Evil* in the chapter ‘What is noble?’ (*Was ist vornehm?*):

Without the *pathos of distance* such as develops from the incarnate differences of classes, from the ruling caste’s constant looking out and looking down on subjects and instruments and from its equally constant exercise of obedience and command, its holding down and holding at a distance, that other, more mysterious pathos could have developed either, that longing for an ever-increasing widening of distance within the soul itself, the formation of ever higher, rarer, more remote, tenser, more comprehensive states, in short precisely the elevation of the type ‘man’[...]. (Nietzsche 1990, 192)¹²

As one can see, Nietzsche’s and Bourdieu’s conclusions are quite different. I suppose Bourdieu would not accept the characterisation of his sociology as aristocratic. And contrary to Nietzsche’s affirmative attitude, Bourdieu makes a rather critical remark about distancing, i.e. the primacy of form over content, which is a central feature of aristocracy in Bourdieu’s analysis (Bourdieu 1984a, 56). However, Bourdieu’s sociology is aristocratic in a certain sense: it is noble or generous (cf. above Bourdieu’s sociological generosity), and it can allow a certain distance-taking as disinterested attitude. And if on one hand the question for Nietzsche is of an artist-philosopher’s productive capacity or power to create new values, for Bourdieu, on the other, it is the question of a producer-sociologist’s capacity – a matter of poesis. Yet in his artist programme, Nietzsche places the emphasis on form over content; and for him philosophy is, above all, a matter of style.

In his *Nachlaß*, Nietzsche makes a brief remark (Nietzsche 1966, 560) that sociology should be replaced by a ‘study of power configurations’ and society by the ‘cultural complex’ (An Stelle der ‘Soziologie’ eine *Lehre von den Herrschaftsgebilden*. An Stelle der ‘Gesellschaft’ den *Kultur-Komplex* als *mein* Vorzugs-Interesse). Al-

though this comment is open to several interpretations, it does not sound, to my mind, so unfamiliar in relation to Bourdieu's sociology of symbolic power (though it might be more close to Weber's sociology of domination, i.e. *Herrschaft*).

Moreover, it seems that for Bourdieu the symbolic struggle is more or less a continuous and endless process. There is no harmonious state or stage for society to attain, rather the opposite. Nietzsche has for his part the notion of the 'eternal recurrence of the same' (*ewige Wiederkunft*) – which is 'the highest formula of affirmation' (*die höchste Formel der Bejahung*) (Nietzsche 1979, 99; Nietzsche 1967f, 455) – that does not imply a simple cycle of the 'same'. It does not mean the repetition or recurrence of historical events or suchlike. It is 'selective'. And it is double-selective, like thinking (cf. Deleuze 1965, 37). For Nietzsche it means 'will' (*Wille*) freed from all morality: whatever I want, I have to want so much, as if I also want the eternal recurrence of it (cf. Kant's categorical imperative). Simmel regards Nietzsche's theory of the 'eternal recurrence' as the highest form of an 'individual law' in the ethics of responsibility: we should live as if we shall live forever, i.e. as if there were an eternal recurrence (Lichtblau 1984, 261). This kind of positive will to power is not found in Bourdieu's thought, though perhaps one could talk in the case of Bourdieu about a sociologist's ethics of responsibility?

What then in comparison with Bourdieu is the world to Nietzsche? In his *Nachlaß*, the so-called *Will to Power*, Nietzsche gives us a clear answer:

And do you know what the world is to me? Shall I show it to you in my mirror?... *This world is the will to power – and nothing besides.* And you yourselves are also this will to power – and nothing besides! (Nietzsche 1966, 916–917; Nietzsche's italics; quoted in English in Nehemas 1985, 75)

I think Bourdieu could agree with this statement. For his part Bourdieu sees society as a battlefield of symbolic power, a struggle from

which one cannot disengage – ‘there is no way out of the game of culture’, claims Bourdieu and quotes Horace: ‘De te fabula narratur’ – the same phrase Marx used in his preface to *Das Kapital* (Bourdieu 1984a, 12; Marx 1867, ix).

Thus to paraphrase Nietzsche, Bourdieu could say: society is the will to power – and nothing besides; and you yourselves are also this will to power. Nevertheless, there is for Bourdieu¹⁴ the will to truth, which, *pace* Bourdieu, is in my opinion ‘positive’ – if not ‘positivist’ – in the very sense of Comte (cf. his *capacité positive*).

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The Field of Intellectuals: The Case of Finland

...it is necessary to remember that the scientific field is both a social universe *like the others*, in which, as elsewhere, questions of power, of capital, of balance of forces, of struggles to maintain or transform the balance of forces, of strategies of preservation or subversion, of interests, etc., are at issue, and *a world apart*, endowed with its own laws of functioning which mean that every single one of the characteristics designated by the concepts used to describe it takes on a specific form which is irreducible to any other. (Pierre Bourdieu 1990a, 297)

In this chapter, the rudiments of a ‘field theory’ of intellectuals (cf. Pierre Bourdieu) are developed, with specific application to the problems of a marginal field. The theory is further discussed with data from a Finnish questionnaire given to leading intellectuals, asking them to name leading Finnish intellectuals and to define the concept of ‘intellectual’. Towards the end, an outline of the Finnish intellectual field is presented. It is compared with the intellectual field *par excellence*, i.e. that found in France.

Introduction

An intellectual cannot exist alone. He needs a scene, an audience, and a group or field of intellectuals in order to be recognised as an intellectual. It is easy to forget this, as we often speak of the ‘last’ intellectuals (Sartre, Aron, etc.) or of the great intellectuals of his-

tory. But even their greatness was related to the practically unanimous recognition given to them by other intellectuals. So when we now deplore the disappearance of the ‘maîtres penseurs’, we are actually saying that the field itself has changed, that the field does not give recognition to single names, but that it has become splintered.

This is the context in which Lyotard (1990, 208) questions the modern role of intellectuals, because there is no longer such any universal (cause) – or universalism – to legitimise or to give justification for the role of intellectual: ‘There should no longer be any intellectuals. That there nevertheless still are is explained by blindness. They have not noticed the fact contrary to the 18th century in the Western history: there is not a universal subject or sacrifice, which would print a mark on reality, in the name of which thought could bring a charge against.’ For instance, Pierre Bourdieu has recently argued precisely for the universality as the common ground for joint actions of the intellectuals (Bourdieu 1989e).

The origin of the intellectual field as such (and in this sense the intellectuals) can be dated to the end of nineteenth century (see Charle 1990; Ory 1990). Then the term was used publicly in its current sense, and what is more important, in connection with a public petition, an open letter signed by a group of men with similar characteristics: a certain academic and cultural position. There is some disagreement concerning the dates of the earliest petitions or addresses: one is 1889, that is just over 100 years ago; another is 1898 the year of the Dreyfus petition and when Clemenceau wrote in his newspaper: ‘N’est ce pas un signe, tous ces intellectuels venus de tous les coins de l’horizon, qui se groupent sur une idée?’ (see Ory 1990, 18–19). Here we can see already all the essential elements of a definition of the intellectual: men with cultural positions, a group, an opinion which they want to make public.

As an historical aside, one of these joint manifestations, even more interesting because the whole European intellectual field was

involved, was the protest address against the attempts to russify Finland by the Russian authorities in 1899, the *Pro Finlandia* address signed by important European intellectuals, e.g. in France Anatole France and Émile Zola, in England Herbert Spencer and Thomas Hardy, in Germany Max Weber and Theodor Mommsen (Huxley 1990, 147; Klinge 1989, 809–811).

One can, of course, say that ‘intellectuals’ existed long before the word was invented (or used referring to them). In this sense, it is quite possible, to use the term, as Jacques Le Goff (1985) does, in connection with the important university teachers of the middle ages. For Le Goff, intellectual meant only two things, to have thinking as profession and to teach one’s thoughts. This characterisation is too simple and connects intellectuals too closely with the university.

Also, long before the term intellectual was invented there were the ‘philosophers’. The Greek philosophers could be called intellectuals, not only in the sense of Le Goff, and in later times one can almost say that the term philosopher was used in practice as synonymous to modern intellectuals. The famous French and slightly pejoratively labelled group ‘Les philosophes’ was already simply an intellectual field, which even coined such ideas as ‘république des lettres’ or ‘société de la pensée’ (see Sartre 1972; Bauman 1987, 35–36), implying a demand of autonomy and a constitution of their own field. So, a combination of philosopher and intellectual constitutes still the most important intellectual category.

Historically, the next category of intellectuals would be the intellectual-politician, that is a person with high academic qualifications and who intermittently takes a role of a leading politician, while retaining his legitimacy in both fields. This combination was typical for several French politicians in the nineteenth century: Guizot, Lamartine, Thiers. This type was also important in Finnish politics from the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century, and even now there are some politicians aspiring to that category, at least by acquisition of highest academic titles.

Instead of using the term intellectual-politician we could call them ‘state intellectuals’, intellectuals who are responsible and ready to accept the responsibility for the really important questions of the society (see also Alapuro 1987). They don’t want simply to interpret the world, nor do they want to change it, but they want to do their duty to the nation, to the country. Such Finnish famous learned statesmen as J. W. Snellman (right-wing Hegelian philosopher, philosophy professor, journalist and politician), J. L. Runeberg (poet, history professor), Y. S. Yrjö-Koskinen (politician, history professor), J. V. Ståhlberg (politician, law professor), and U. Kekkonen (a professional politician with academic and cultural capital) were thus politicians and intellectuals of this type, who did not only participate in the day-to-day affairs of the state but also defined the great questions concerning Finland as a nation, The Finnish constitution, Finland’s relations to the eastern great neighbour, Russia and the limits of its actions.

The existence of this type of intellectual is still today strongly defended by some important Finnish intellectual figures, who themselves are not politically active but who think it is important to ‘defend’ the state in the present situation, when the ‘laissez-faire’ ideology is flying high. In Finland, a recent debate between some leading intellectuals, has contributed to the formulation of the positions for and against state intellectuals and their relationship to the state.

Another way to describe this relationship, is to say as Sartre does in his essay *Plaidoyer pour les intellectuels* (1972), that the state intellectuals (including professors in their role of both high government officials and free scientists) incorporate the deepest contradiction of intellectuals, namely that they have been educated to serve the dominating class – and in their activities related to the state they often do precisely that – and that they are also supposed to serve scientific freedom and take responsibility for universal values, such as truth, freedom, justice, etc.

The third important type is the non-academic artist-intellectual,

which, in fact, dominated the intellectual field until very recently. Intellectual in this sense means an explicit refusal to seek secure academic positions and recognition; in fact refusal of all kinds of ‘official’ signs of recognition. The decision by Sartre not to accept the Nobel Prize is an extreme case.

The ‘first’ intellectual who met these qualifications was Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Émile Zola who was the epitome of intellectual in the Dreyfus case, and Sartre – the incarnation of the ‘total intellectual’ (Bourdieu 1992, 293) – are classic intellectual figures. A true intellectual would not need academic titles or security. Even quite recently, as Bourdieu has remarked in his *Homo Academicus* (1984b), the best known French intellectual stars, such as Althusser, Barthes, Deleuze, Derrida, Foucault, Baudrillard have had very low academic positions which meant for instance that they could not have ‘students’ in the formal sense: they could not supervise theses, as they had not the proper degrees. Subsequently their positions changed: Althusser, Baudrillard, Derrida and Foucault wrote a *Thèse d’État*, and Barthes and Foucault were elected in the Collège de France. This is in a sense a compromise between marginality and high academic recognition, as the Collège is outside the university system and the lectures are open to everybody. On the other hand, both Derrida and Althusser remained in a rather low academic position (*École Normale Supérieure*), and refused to covet higher positions. Baudrillard has had his career in low-status universities. It is precisely this type of people we mainly mean when we speak of a ‘real’ intellectual: academic positions or formal qualifications are more or less a hindrance, or in the best case, a neutral base, but neither a sufficient nor necessary condition for being an intellectual.

One interesting characterisation of the intellectual history has been presented by Régis Debray in his book *Le Pouvoir intellectuel en France* (Debray 1979), with an informative English title: *Teachers, Writers, Celebrities* (Debray 1981). Debray divides the French intellectual history into three periods. The first period (1880–

1930) Debray calls the academic period. It was dominated by university teachers. The second period (1920–1960) is called the literary epoch. The intellectual scene was dominated by writers and publishers. The third and the last period, which began in 1968, Debray calls the period of mediacracy (*médiacratie*). The scene has been dominated by celebrity-intellectuals (Debray's examples concerned the so-called 'new philosophers') together with the leading journalists in the newspapers, radio and television.

To develop this further, something else is needed. Both changes in the concept of intellectual as well as in the historical types of intellectuals can best be analysed with the help of a Bourdieusian field framework. The most important single condition for an intellectual is specific capital recognised in and by the intellectual field. In the case of an academic intellectual this means that he (we use 'he' deliberately, as the intellectual field is still predominantly a male field) must be able to transfer the capital acquired in a specific field to a more general intellectual field. For non-academic intellectuals this means that they usually must acquire specific capital in some other cultural fields: literature, music, art, etc. It is also possible (but increasingly rare) to enter the intellectual field directly and earn one's capital there: by becoming a good debater, by writing important essays, by, perhaps, having also another type of a cultural position (publisher, bureaucrat, etc.).

In the most typical case this means that an intellectual leaves his 'own' field to become an intellectual, by using his acquired capital as a base from which he takes positions, comments and criticises the world. As Sartre has said, an intellectual is often seen as a person who 'misuses' his position, and who would have no right to enter a field for which he has no specific qualifications (for example, when he as a writer used his literary capital to give emphasis to his criticism of the war in Algeria). This kind of critique has been common since Zola's days, against intellectuals who meddle in things they have no business to meddle.

Zygmunt Bauman has, in his book *Legislators and Interpreters* (1987), given intellectuals two main roles: as legislators, saying what is good and bad, laying down rules (and certainly, in Bauman's sense also taking part in actual legislation, as the Finnish state intellectuals have done), and interpreters, the post-modern intellectuals, who read out meanings of texts. The interpreters are not interested in the universal truth, judgement or taste and refuse to differentiate between communities of meaning (Bauman 1987, 197). It should be noted that both interpretation and legislation are intellectual activities only as far as the field accepts them. A post-modern intellectual has another set of rules to follow and another kind of intellectual capital to covet, i.e. his intellectual field differs from that of the modern intellectual.

This brings us back to the concept of field. As developed by Bourdieu (see Bourdieu 1989c, 111–115; Broady 1990) the essential characteristics of a field are as follows: it is a system of relations between agents and institutions who compete for profits and capitals that are specific to the field and shared jointly (but in unequal shares). A field is autonomous in the sense that its capital is specific to it, and (relatively) worthless in other fields. To be recognised as an important sociologist, has value outside the field, although the specific determinants of this recognition (theoretical, empirical, methodological abilities and achievements) are only understood properly inside the field. Hence the often recurring phenomenon that an artist or scientist who is highly respected by outsiders may be considered as a nonentity by the particularly knowledgeable members of the field, whereas inside the field there may be agents who have a high prestige but who are practically unknown and unrecognised by outsiders.

The intellectual field differs from many other fields, discussed by Bourdieu, in the sense that its agents must fulfil two conditions: they must be recognised as members of the autonomous intellectual field and they must act (by writing, participating, etc.) outside the

field or, as Bourdieu (1989e, 99) formulates it: 'Intellectuals have come about historically in and by their overcoming the opposition between pure culture and engagement. Thus they are bi-dimensional beings. To claim the title of intellectual, cultural producers must fulfil two conditions; on the one hand they must belong to an intellectually autonomous field, one independent of religious, political, economic and other powers, and they must respect that field's particular laws; on the other, they must deploy their specific expertise and authority in their particular intellectual domain in a political activity outside it.' In addition to these two conditions, as a third condition they must have recognition in their own specific subfield: art, science, criticism, cultural administration or journalism. But as noted above, it does not suffice that they have positions inside these subfields.

Another important point following from the autonomy requirement is that peripheral fields, such as Finnish sociology are fields which have certain restrictions. They are simultaneously subfields of a larger field (or of several fields), e.g. Anglo-American sociology, or the specific field of the sociology of classes or family, etc.

Artistic or scientific fields are seldom restricted by national boundaries, but the intellectual field as such has a certain autonomy because much of the essential discussion takes place inside one country. Intellectual movements cross boundaries easily, but inside one country they have a developmental logic of their own. Dominated, peripheral fields may often have multiple centres. For example, in Finland we have intellectuals who orient themselves towards different international centres, and create in this sense also inside the country various competing spheres: French, German, English, etc. A peculiarity of peripheral intellectual fields is that they may happily combine elements that in their authentic environment are definitely irreconcilable. Thus, in sociology, somebody may discuss Bourdieu and Derrida inside the same framework, and not be at all encumbered by this extraordinary alchemy. Actually, in

some cases this combination may turn out to be an extremely fruitful approach, made impossible in its country of origin by considerations which lie outside a strictly sociological discourse.

From Bourdieu's point of view, the essential task for intellectuals is the protection of their autonomy ('corporatism of the universal') against all kinds of attempts of using their competence in conditions different from those valid in the field. When intellectuals enter other fields, they are supposed not to give up an inch of their own field's autonomy. In practice, this is an impossible requirement, even though the intellectuals' proneness to uncompromising stands, and readiness to give up their political loyalties because of their principles – and this is the reason why a social democratic intellectual is often a contradiction in terms – not *vice versa*, is explained by this requirement.

The recognition attained by individual intellectuals inside their field is thus dependent on the capital they have in their own specific field of activity and the readiness to engage (risk) this capital in the battles that are waged in the outside world.

Here we have outlined the rudiments of a 'field theory' of intellectuals. This stands in contradiction to another possibility to define intellectuals, namely as a 'class' or stratum. In this case intellectuals are defined by their profession and education, sometimes in a broader, and sometimes in a stricter sense. In the broadest sense, the intellectuals as a 'new class' include everybody with higher education, or everybody engaged in specific professions, whereas in the stricter sense we only take the top layer of these professions. We do not find the new class approach very attractive, because it leaves out the very important idea of mutual dependencies, of hierarchies, of questions of entrance (one enters a class by acquiring its defining characteristics), and, most importantly, of autonomy. The new class is a class, as dependent on other classes as the other classes are.

Bauman has emphasised strongly the structural quality of intel-

lectuals: 'We will treat the category of the intellectual as a structural element within the societal figuration, an element defined not by its intrinsic qualities, but by the place it occupies within the system of dependencies which such a figuration represents, and by the role it performs in the reproduction and development of the figuration' (Bauman 1987, 19).

To come back to the question of the different types of intellectuals, Debray's above mentioned periods can be adapted – *mutatis mutandis* – to the Finnish intellectual history. From the end of the Russian Grand Duchy era to the early years of independence university professors (from the Hegelian Snellman to the Vienna positivist Eino Kaila) dominated the intellectual field in Finland. A specific Finnish feature during this period was – as has been often pointed out (see Klinge 1988, 18; Alapuro 1987) – that many of them also served the government in high posts. As a matter of fact, it was not until the end of the second World War when the political role of the university professors weakened, although even today it has not vanished completely. After this, writers – who had a certain role already in the 1920s and 1930s – really entered the stage (e.g., the modernism of the 1950s and 1960s). Although the birth of the mediocratic period took place in Finland in the late 1960s accompanied by the growing importance of television, one can say that it was first during the 1980s that this period has reached its climax in Finland.

The question is whether the media intellectuals really have such an important position in the present situation or whether the old couple, academics and writers, still dominate the scene. The fourth category discussed here, which does not appear in Debray's periods, namely the state intellectuals (a category into which Debray himself might in these days be classified, alongside with his colleagues Jacques Attali and Jack Lang) is more problematic. The heyday of state intellectuals coincides with that of university intellectuals, but they are not completely identical. And the present day state intellectuals – cultural administrators, bishops (of Evangelical Lutheran Church

which is a state church like in all Nordic countries) and the like (and in some cases, university professors) are a quite different category.

The field of intellectuals in Finland

Our data on the Finnish intellectual field comes from an inquiry organised in collaboration with cultural editors of the leading Finnish newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* (with a daily circulation of roughly half a million copies, i.e. 10 % of the population), published in April 1989. The original idea came from the inquiry of the French review *Lire* 1981, or rather Pierre Bourdieu's critique of it in the appendix of his *Homo Academicus* (Bourdieu 1984b). On the one hand, our idea was to test the French example in the Finnish context and to try to outline the Finnish intellectual field. On the other hand, we were interested in knowing how those people who have intellectual power react to the question concerning Finnish intellectuals, which has been quite a delicate topic in Finland. We tried to simulate the inquiry of *Lire* as far possible (including the groupings of chosen addressees), but being – paradoxically – at the same time conscious of Bourdieu's critique. For us, the Finnish inquiry in co-operation with the leading newspaper was also a way of collecting data and a conscious public provocation with interesting effects to be observed.

By coincidence, the inquiry was repeated in France, at the same time as we sent our questionnaire, by *L'Événement du jeudi* (published in February 1989). Our question, sent to 317 writers, artists, scholars, journalists, politicians and cultural bureaucrats (of which 216 responded; altogether 66 percent gave a list of names) in Finland, was almost an exact copy of *Lire*'s question: 'Who do you think are the three most prominent Finnish intellectuals living today?'. But, unlike *Lire*, we asked respondents also to give shortly their reasons for their list of names. In the new inquiry by *L'Événement du jeudi* the question was posed slightly differently; they asked

the respondents to name ‘five personalities’ who have ‘intellectual power’ in France. Power is more restrictive than importance, but it all still boils down to the same thing: who is the most important intellectual, viewed from the perspective of the intellectual field.

In France, such ‘intellectual hit parades’ have an obvious function. They are used in looking for ‘successors’ to the great intellectual *maîtres* like Sartre or Foucault. In Finland, already the point of departure was different, because the discourse on Finnish intellectuals has been anything but self-evident. For many of the respondents the first question was: Are there any Finnish intellectuals at all? The fact that two thirds of the respondents named ‘important’ Finnish intellectuals supports the conclusion that the answer is positive. However, there were also some respondents who did not give a list of intellectuals or wrote that there are no intellectuals in Finland (many of those who did not respond at all may be assumed to agree)...

Thus, our data consists of answers to the question: who are the three most important (significant) intellectuals in Finland today? The questionnaire left space to both general and specific comments. The respondents were chosen by us, together with the leading cultural editors of *Helsingin Sanomat*, as representatives of different sections of the intellectual field (following the procedure of *Lire*). We did not strive at completeness, but we used instead intuitive criteria in choosing from subgroups individuals who would represent the whole group: so we chose older authors, younger authors, women authors, male authors, etc. Most of the names chosen could be included into the intellectual field, and several were mentioned in the replies.

The inquiry aroused discussion already before the results were published, ranging from criticism of the inquiry as a ‘police action’, where the list of intellectuals was seen as an ideal list for the intelligence services, or to intimidate the intellectuals, to counter lists that were either invented out of the hat or voted by readers of one afternoon paper.

To give a brief summary of our results, a typical Finnish intellectual is a scholar in the humanities, a philosopher or a writer. He is a 50–70 years old man. He is employed by the state (including the university) or financed by a government grant. He belongs often to the Swedish-Finnish minority (among our respondents, only 39 were Swedish-Finnish, whereas four out of ten leading intellectuals were Swedish-speaking). As to the names of the list, there was a relatively high consensus about the first ones, followed by a large dispersion of the less important intellectuals.

The *primus inter pares* among Finnish intellectuals was the philosopher Georg Henrik von Wright, emeritus professor of philosophy at the University of Helsinki (who after the war succeeded Ludwig Wittgenstein in Cambridge) and a member of the old Academy of Finland (comparable to the *Académie Française*). Second and third in the list of the Finnish intellectuals were the Neustadt-prize poet and writer (and owner-director of a small publishing house) Paavo Haavikko and the essayist and director of a Swedish-language publishing house, Johannes Salminen.

Among the first ten in the list there were no women. Five out of these were academics (some with double roles, like professor and bishop); the other five were writers and essayists. If one compares the lists of intellectuals in France and Finland, one can identify an astonishing structural similarity between them (for example, in the portrait of the typical intellectual or that there was only one woman among the first ten in the two lists, etc.). There were, however, big differences, too, and after the publication of the results in the leading Finnish newspaper many reactions and comments indicated that the issue concerning intellectuals in Finland is more touchy than in France. It is a specific characteristic of Finnish culture that people – even intellectuals themselves – think that anti-intellectualism dominates Finnish culture.

In any case, we can quite easily find many Finnish counterparts or equivalents to the French intellectuals (see Figure 3.1). In Fin-

L'Evenement du jeudi

Helsingin Sanomat

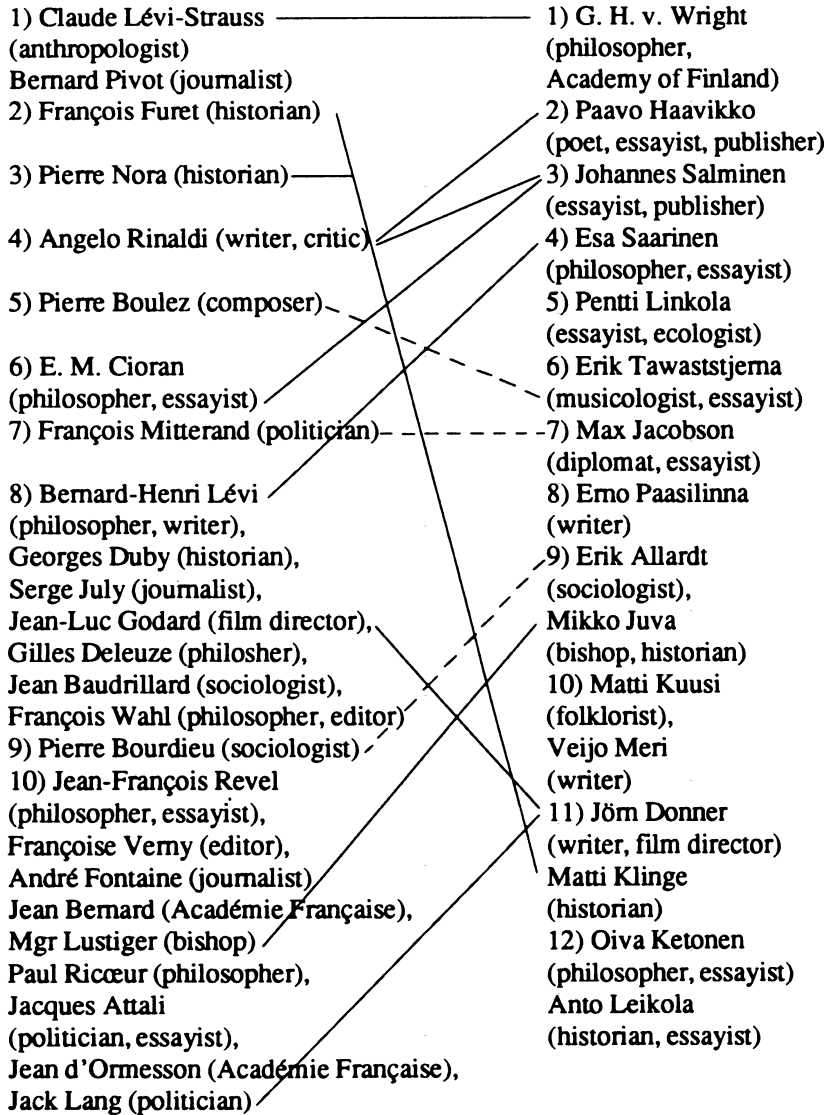


Figure 3.1 The 'hit parades of intellectuals' in France and Finland in 1989.

land, G. H. von Wright has very much the same status as Claude Lévi-Strauss in France. In France, there have traditionally been some modernist poets such as Michaux or Aragon on the list; we have our leading modernist poet Paavo Haavikko. The Romanian-French essayist E. M. Cioran can be matched with Swedish-Finnish essayist and moralist Johannes Salminen or some other Finnish figures on the list. The history professor Matti Klinge has had a somewhat similar role in rewriting Finnish history as François Furet in France. A young Finnish philosopher Esa Saarinen's public role is close to that of Bernard-Henri Lévy. On the other hand, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to find out counterparts to some other French intellectual figures. In Finland we do not have an influential television program like the *Apostrophes* used to be or a personality like Bernard Pivot. No Finnish politician has such an intellectual role as François Mitterrand or Jack Lang in France (not even the writer, film director, M.P., Jörn Donner). The emeritus professor of musicology and author of an outstanding Sibelius biography, Erik Tawaststjerna is not comparable to Pierre Boulez. Also, the sociology professor and head of the new Finnish Academy (with functions similar to the CNRS in France), Erik Allardt has a somewhat different position than Pierre Bourdieu in France.

The differences in intellectual traditions explain certain differences between the French and Finnish lists. In Finland there are no such 'post-structuralist' philosophers like Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida. The hegemony of Anglo-American analytical philosophy has been more or less unchallenged for decades. Since the 1930's, analytical philosophers have been prominent intellectuals in Finland (inspired by Eino Kaila who was an external member of the Vienna circle). Unlike France, in Finland we have had quite a lively intellectual ecological debate, e.g., between von Wright, Allardt and the ultra-green author Pentti Linkola. Ecological themes have been recently one of the leading intellectual topics in Finland.

One more interesting common feature in the French and Finnish lists of intellectuals is the age structure. In both lists most of the intellectuals are fifty years or older. In France they seem to be even older than in Finland. Interestingly enough, also the younger generation of Finnish respondents named older personalities. All in all, the list of intellectuals resulting from the Finnish inquiry – as well as the general reaction – was not unexpected. The names of the list mirror greatly the media publicity that most of them have had. Although the discourse about intellectuals has not been as self-evident and common in Finland as in France, the members of the Finnish intellectual field were quite ready to name and characterise Finnish intellectuals when asked. And paradoxically, after the debate inspired by our inquiry, the use of the word ‘intellectual’ has become more common and accepted in Finland. It is now more legitimate to speak of Finnish intellectuals, while before the word often used to be pejorative and in quotation marks.

Matti Klinge (1989) has pointed out that universities located in the capitals were historically exceptions and that we can still see differences between the countries where universities were located outside the power centres and where they were established in the centres (like Berlin and Paris). The effects of a ‘fusion’ between power and academia can also be seen in the Finnish case: of the 11 first university intellectuals all were from the University of Helsinki. Among the 25 first intellectuals there were only three who were from outside Helsinki. In this sense, the position of the University of Helsinki is close to absolute monopoly.

Another interesting point is that the list is evidently composed of two different kinds of public intellectuals: the ‘permanent’ names and the ‘butterflies’, whose fame is based on recent publicity and whose position may change quickly. An interesting case in point is Jan Magnus Jansson, who can be said to represent a prototypical Finnish intellectual: a professor, poet, journalist (editor of the leading Swedish-language newspaper *Hufvudstadsbladet*) and politician

(former government member and party chairman), but who received only two votes. The reason to this can be that he was not active in public at the time of the inquiry, or that he has had a much too overt political role. This example shows also that other approaches than an inquiry, which concentrates on the leading names, are needed.

This was what we presented as a first analysis of the results. One of the objectives of this article is to continue the analysis of our survey by using the answers as a basis. Especially we are interested in analysing the different arguments given by the respondents when naming their candidates.

The four intellectual fractions, following the *Lire's* respondent categories, were:

- academic intellectuals
- artists (and writers)
- journalists
- cultural administrators (bureaucrats, politicians, bishops, etc.)

After 'coding' the responses, basically by using the words of the respondents (such as independence, critical spirit, etc.) these were compared against the four categories of intellectuals, sex, the main candidates proposed by the respondents, etc. The results give a rough picture of definitions of intellectual suggested by different fractions of the intellectual field in Finland.

All respondents did not give reasons for their choices: only 99 of the 216 respondents explained their choices. The explanations varied from some words to longer essays.

It should also be pointed out that the distributions of those being mentioned in the whole data and in the subset of the present analysis are slightly different. The order of the first ten names is practically the same, but in the case of those mentioned more rarely, this is not true. On the other hand, as we are interested in the arguments for mentioning a certain name by a certain type of person, the 'representativity' is not a problem.

The explanations varied greatly. In most of the cases the respondents used descriptive words or expressions, such as genuine, reasoned, sense of humour, justice, interpretation, consciousness. These formed the basis for almost 90 different code categories.

There were, however, some recurring (or synonymous) words which seem to suggest some sort of consensus concerning the definition of the intellectual. These qualities were (in the order of frequency) the following: Autonomy, critical spirit, opinion leadership, courage, wisdom-knowledge, media publicity, wide range of interests, participation in a debate, and finally, being Finnish.

This list contains some rather surprising omissions: for example only relatively few respondents (7 out of 99) emphasised the cosmopolitan or European character of intellectuals.

Based on the occurrence of the most typical elements in the definitions, which cover most adequately all these qualities of 'consensus', we can present some modal responses, which at the same time can be used as 'ready-made' definitions:

Everyone [of the three names on the list] has spoken about important 'general problems' that have received broad publicity, have been radical ['gone into the roots'], independent and critical against the power and establishment, in a manner proper to true intellectuals. Their positions also arise from a broad cultural basis and a many-sided general learning, which is also a sign of an important intellectual. (Respondent 41)

Or in a more concise manner: 'They think independently. They act independently. They concentrate on essential things. They seek continuously new knowledge.' (Respondent 5)

In the answers, the qualities represented by intellectuals are personal qualities, they do not concern relationships (i.e. the concept of a field or of a community is not present). Only a few respondents stated that an intellectual belongs to a group of intellectuals and at least as many (or few) replies denied the existence of a class or group of intellectuals. On the other hand, certain qualities, such as

autonomy, wide range of interests, and wisdom, could be described as field-qualities, to the extent that they describe the forms of the symbolic capital that necessitate the existence of a specific field which recognises these qualities.

The criteria given by the respondents can be divided into three broad categories: 'thought', 'action' and 'cultural capital'. 'Thought' includes such descriptions as 'thinker, open-minded, honest, critical, truthful', while 'action' refers to such qualities as 'influential, taking part, courage', and 'capital' (in the sense of possession of symbolic capital in the field) to such qualities as 'specialist, independent, important, influences opinions'. It was possible to emphasise all three qualities at once, a feat accomplished by 18 respondents, distributed evenly among the four major categories.

Researchers and administrators emphasised thought, the artists gave precedence to action, while capital was most evenly distributed. Interestingly enough, women emphasised strongly action in their definitions.

Table 3.1. *Intellectuals: Criteria and categories (in absolute numbers)*

The main criteria	Re- searchers	Artists	Admin- istrators	Jour- nalists	(women)	all
Autonomy	11	6	2	4	3	23
Critical spirit	11	5	4	3	4	23
Opinion-leadership	5	6	6	6	9	23
Courage	8	1	2	2	2	13
Wisdom	1	4	3	5	1	13
Media-publicity	3	4	5	0	4	12
Wide range of interests	6	2	0	4	2	12
Debate	4	1	2	4	7	11
Being Finnish	1	3	2	5	4	11
Negative qualities	9	6	2	5	4	22
Difficult to answer	5	3	2	5	3	15
Altogether	30	28	19	22	21	99

The specific criteria for an intellectual varied in an interesting way across our four categories of intellectuals (see Table 3.1). For academics, the following criteria were the most important: autonomy, critical spirit, courage and broad range of interests. Surprisingly enough, neither wisdom nor intelligence was considered important (only one mention). For artists, the most important criteria were independence, opinion leadership, critical attitude and wisdom, whereas courage was mentioned only once. For journalists, the most important criteria were opinion leadership, being Finnish, independence and wisdom. Interestingly, journalists did not think that media-publicity is a criterion of intellectual.

For cultural administrators, opinion leadership, media-publicity and critical spirit were predominant requirements. The criterion of the wide range of interests was absent. Therefore, we can say that the concept of intellectual differs clearly between different categories of intellectuals. Among them, the most general and typical were the academics' definitions.

Many respondents mentioned also negative criteria. For instance an intellectual should not just follow fashions, or be fashionable. Also public media participation was not a quality of intellectual for some respondents. Altogether, the negative qualities were often more or less 'offhand', clearly mentioned as secondary criteria. This means that being an intellectual is not a matter of taste.

One interesting point is that many respondents said that it was difficult to answer the question. The reasons for this were that this is not a 'beauty contest', or that it is difficult to mention three most important intellectuals or that it was impossible to find a person who would represent a certain group (e.g. women intellectuals).

As to the women, they are different, also as intellectuals. We have been criticised for the under-representation of women in the inquiry. Our defence is that both the question and our choice for respondents was based on the idea of a hierarchical field and the factual proportions of men and women in the field. If we had chosen

equally women and men, we should have had to forget the structure of the field, which is male dominated, like it or not. But more importantly, the answers of women, revealed clearly that it is not very easy to find the most important woman intellectual (thus, women themselves agreed that the concept of women intellectual is problematic!). The respondent had either to use other, more personal principles of selection or then make a mechanical choice. In the words of one female respondent: ‘The third name was, in a sense, dictated out of obligation. I decided that there must be a woman in the list and that the environmental point of view should also be present’ (Respondent 68).

In fact, the main difference was that women did not mention leading intellectuals, but instead chose names that were not mentioned by other respondents. Thus, more than half of the women who gave explanations for their choices, did not mention even one of the leading names. This does not mean that women chose unknown women: they chose mainly men, but other men than the leading ones. So, for instance, some of the top five of the list were mentioned only once or twice by women, (i.e. among the 99 respondents who gave explanations).

Also, the criteria used by women were different. For them, the most important element was opinion leadership and general influence. The next was discussion, while independence – the most important criterion for men – was mentioned only by three women.

As said before, action seems to be important in the definition of intellectuals by women, while thought is less important.

All this can be summarised in a figure of the ‘field’ of intellectuals where both the leading names and the major categories of the respondents were described. We can complete the picture with another important component: the main motives/criteria for intellectuals, thus getting the following picture over the field of intellectuals (Figure 3.2).

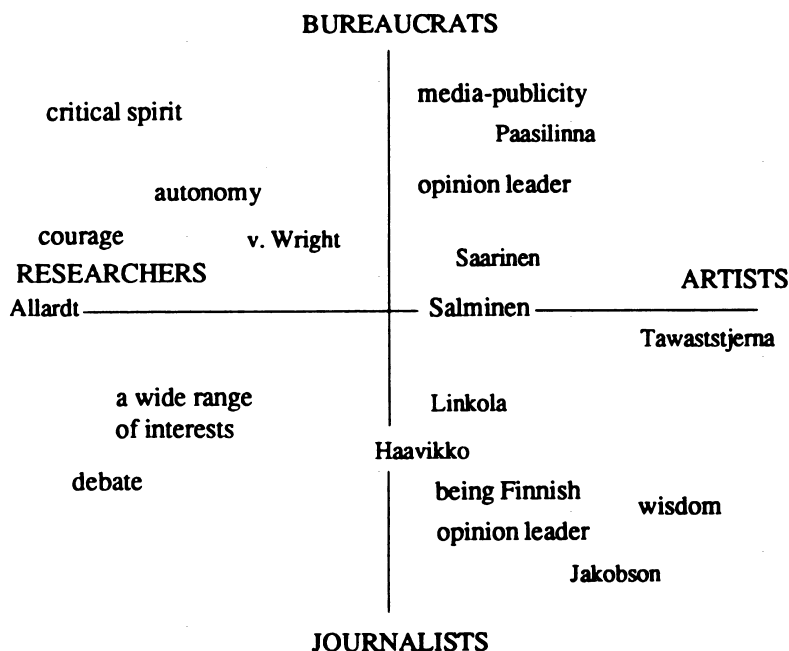


Figure 3.2 *Intellectual types.*

This picture is not strictly a unequivocal presentation of the results. It is based on two simultaneous tables: the first one relates the different categories of intellectuals to the criteria of intellectuals, and the second one relates the same categories of intellectuals to the leading intellectuals of the inquiry. The third possible connection, the names with the criteria is not fully considered. But we still think that the table gives a quite adequate picture over the field of intellectuals in Finland and its different important poles.

Conclusions

Generally speaking, it is important to note that the definition of intellectuals is a self-definition. As we – following Bourdieu's definition – have stated, the concept of intellectual always refers to a

field. To be an intellectual presupposes knowledge of certain rules, recognition by the other members of the field and possession of specific capital which guarantees the autonomy of the field.

On the other hand, in a country like Finland, the field of intellectuals is often a subfield, the dominating centre of which is in France, Germany, etc. Finland is a periphery of the international field of intellectuals. Keeping that in mind, it is, of course, quite problematic to make comparisons between France – a country of intellectuals *par excellence* – and Finland. But as a comparison of centre and periphery it is an interesting configuration. And, as our analysis indicates, there are structural similarities – i.e. a certain homology – between the two very different countries.

A specific feature of Finnish intellectuals has, for historical reasons, been their dependency on the state. The connection between the university and politics has been very close. Now this connection has become less tight, but especially between academic intellectuals and the state the connection is still a close one.

At the same time, as we have shown in the case of celebrity-intellectuals, Finnish intellectuals are more and more dependent on the media, i.e. the latest development in the history of intellectuals. However, contrary to the trend in other West-European countries, the concept of intellectuals is still a sensitive subject in Finland, as the responses to our query have shown.

Acknowledgements

We – I and J. P. Roos – wish to thank Jukka Gronow, Anne Haila, Niilo Kauppi and Arto Noro for useful comments and corrections. We would like to express our particular thanks to Markku Lonkila, who participated in the gathering and analysis of the data, as well as to Heikki Hellman and Pekka Tarkka from the culture section of the newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* for both financial and intellectual support to our project in its first phase (cf. Rahkonen & Roos 1989).

Appendix: Analysis of correspondences

We conducted also a correspondence analysis based on the textual descriptions of intellectuals. In principle, this is an excellent method to analyse ‘open questions’, but we have had some problems in using the program (SPAD.T, 1989) and therefore have to treat the results as very preliminary.

Above, the results are mainly based on a simple tabulation ‘by hand’ and we know exactly why a person or a criterion is placed where it is placed. In the correspondence analysis, the results are not so clear (the essential difference between quantitative and qualitative analysis is perhaps that in the latter, the researcher knows exactly how he has arrived at his results, while in the former he does not). We advise readers to be suspicious about the extreme points, where the data is very weak. On the other hand, now the axes are not determined in advance, ‘artificially’, but based on ‘real’ relationships. Therefore we can use the correspondence analysis for the interpretation of main dimensions of the data.

This kind of data (where for instance cultural capital is not directly included) does not give us a complete picture of the field. But it gives some hints of the structure and the hierarchies of the same.

In short, the results of the analysis show that the main dimensions of being intellectual, autonomy and critical spirit, opinion leadership and media publicity, courage and wide range of interests and finally wisdom, are very unevenly distributed across the whole field and that the different fractions of intellectuals have very different roles in the internal field (Figure 3.3).

But it is clear that concerning the hierarchical structure of the field, we can say that academic and literary intellectuals still represent the most valued categories and that media celebrity is not so highly valued. It is also interesting to note that the two main poles of the field are described by the following categories (disregarding the extreme placements):

- POLE 1: Academic and general intellectuals, creativity, influence, thinking and wisdom vs. being critical, cultured and original (leading to intellectual marginality, others)
- POLE 2: Artist, influence in society, engagement (action), being un-fashionable vs. courage, observation, being cultured.

It is interesting that journalists and cultural administration are both in the opposing positions to the more central intellectual categories. Thus, finally, we would like to suggest that the ideal of a classical intellectual is still very much alive, at least in Finland, even though it consists of two dimensions. Further, in the centre of the field there is at least one very high hill from which the universal intellectual values are being defended.

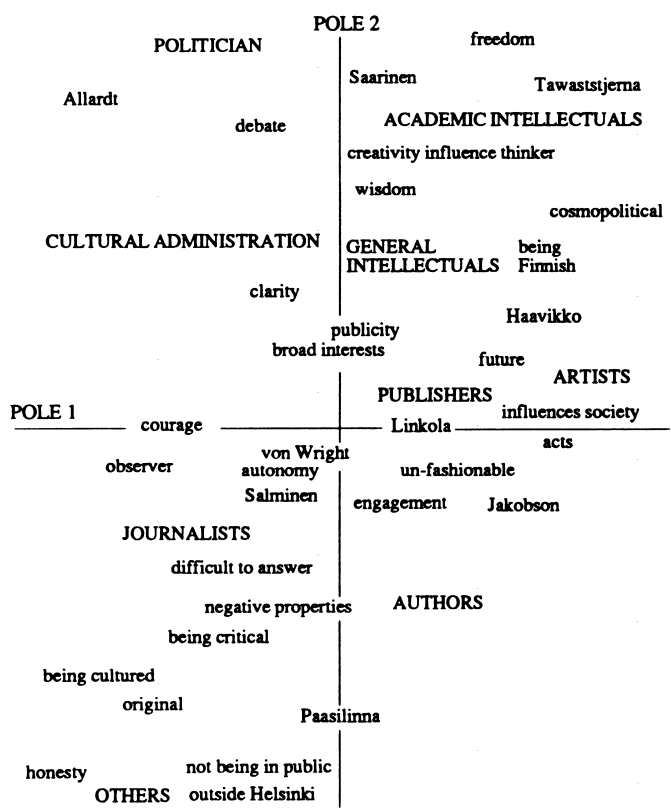


Figure 3.3. *Dimensions of the definition of intellectual.*

4

Truth and Fiction: On the Biographical Fallacy – A Critical Note

The delusion that we are able to program our life is a part of ancient fidelity to something like a destiny or destination, as if we were called by somebody or something, let us say, by an author – and this includes ourselves as a hidden author – called, by authorization, to perform the role he (or it) has written on our behalf. (Lyotard 1988, 3)

The truth is out there. – *The X Files* (TV series)

In this chapter the ‘(auto)biographical illusion’ (Bourdieu) is discussed from a theoretical and methodological point of view. What kind of theoretical and philosophical premises lie behind traditional biographical research? Is there such thing as a ‘true’ story? I shall also discuss narrative patterns. It is noted that as narratives autobiographies have a very traditional pattern, that of epic and tragedy. On the other hand, it is pointed out that the so-called ‘realistic’ conception of life stories, taking the autobiography as ‘real life’ itself, is very problematic – and not only theoretically. In another words, the story of one’s life – and its narrative pattern – do not meet the contingency of life. One suggested strategy for avoiding the biographical fallacy in biographical studies is to accept the fact that life stories are primarily texts with a logic and narrative pattern of their own. It is possible to take autobiographies as ‘performatives’ as philosophically defined by J. L. Austin. In the following text such an approach is defended.

Ironists and metaphysicians

In his book *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, American philosopher Richard Rorty, referring to Heidegger, makes an interesting distinction between ‘ironists’ and ‘metaphysicians’ (Rorty 1989, 75). I cannot go into Rorty’s argument in detail here, but shall just give a brief characterisation. According to Rorty, ‘metaphysicians believe there are, out there in the world, real essences which it is our duty to discover and which are disposed to assist in their own discovery’, whereas ironists think we are not able ‘to step outside our language in order to compare it with something else’ and believe in ‘the contingency and historicity of that language’. (Rorty 1989, 74–75.) To paraphrase this in the following way: metaphysicians believe that there is a reality, e.g. a real essence, behind many different appearances, and it can be found; ironists think there is no such an essence or ‘a final vocabulary’.

I think Rorty’s distinction between metaphysicians and ironists is applicable in the field of (auto)biographical research as well. Roughly speaking, the field of biographical research can be said to have been divided up into two camps: on the one hand, ‘metaphysicians’ who seek the ‘true’ or ‘real life’ in life histories; on the other, ‘ironists’ who read life stories as texts and stories (which can be said to have lives of their own) without trying to go beyond them.¹

Before going into closer discussion of these, almost diametrically opposite, viewpoints in biographical research, I would like to clarify a number of points.

Firstly, I want to emphasise that I distinguish autobiography from biography, for biography is, among other things, a way of writing history. In the following discussion about biographies my focus is almost exclusively on autobiographies (written or oral), and especially on the problems concerning biographical research in sociology. However, I believe that some of my critical remarks might be relevant to biographies in general. Biography (which can be

based on an autobiographical interview) has recently gone through quite big changes, though it is a rather established way of writing history (cf. so-called biographies of famous people as well as ordinary people based on historical documents). Critical review of sources, as well as other requirements of reliability applied to all historical research, also holds for biographies.

Secondly, as I concentrate explicitly on the interpretation of autobiographic research, and particularly on written autobiographies, it is necessary to make another distinction, too, between the autobiographies of so-called famous people and between the autobiographies of so-called ordinary people. The former would include, e.g., politicians, intellectuals, and so on – in whose case we can apply critical review of sources (many things, like events, can be rather easily documented, verified or falsified) and whose stories can also be used as historical data. With the latter, however, data cannot always be verified or falsified, or at least verification or falsification) is not easily ascertained. Thus, my comments here are exclusively directed towards social scientific research of (auto)biographies and recent discussion about them. The leading figure and pioneer in Finland of this, to my mind, problematic approach has been J. P. Roos, whose work I will deal with more thoroughly as an exemplary case.²

Autobiography as a description of ‘real life’

From the perspective of the recent history of social research, the birth of (auto)biographical research took place in the late 1970s. The origination of this ‘life-history approach’ and its institutionalisation (first as an ad hoc research group) occurred internationally in 1978 at the IX World Congress of Sociology in Uppsala, Sweden (see Bertaux 1978). Partly inspired by this occurrence, and Roos’ visit to Poland, an autobiography competition was organised in Finland by the research project of the Way of Life in Social Change led by J. P. Roos (see Roos & Vilkkö 1980).³

One important motive for the recent boom in qualitative (auto)biographical studies – the so-called biographical turn – was the search for authenticity, i.e. a real essence in the above-mentioned sense (Rorty). The French sociologist Daniel Bertaux, internationally one of the most prominent organisers of biographical research, has spoken about ‘life hunters’ who chase ‘real life’ (Bertaux 1995; Bertaux 1997). The early days of this biographical turn was inspired by the search for ‘real life’, a task that could not possibly be fulfilled by quantitative methods. On the contrary, with the help of qualitative methods, and in this case, of biographical research, it was thought that the real essence of life, authentic life, could be captured and unmasked. In this sense, the rise of biographical research in the late 1970s was part of a larger movement, the upswing of the qualitative approach.

J. P. Roos’s research project on the Way of Life in Social Change is a good example of this new development in Finland. The *leitmotiv* of this project was ‘real life’, as Roos formulated it: ‘curiosity about how people really live’ in their everyday life (Roos 1978, 75; cf. Roos 1985a; Roos 1988b). On the other hand, biographical research, as well as qualitative research in general, was to some extent a restoration of the Chicago School tradition of the 1920s, with which there was a Finnish connection via Roos’ teacher, the late Professor Heikki Waris (see Roos’s 1981).

For the time being, one could say that there is already quite a long and strong tradition in realistic interpretations of autobiographies both internationally and in Finland. Such an approach seeks to understand authentic or ‘raw experience’, usually by the use of so-called unstructured interviews, like autobiographical interviews. David Silverman has called these approaches, which stress the primacy of ‘experience’ or ‘perception’, ‘Romantic’, a tradition which can be traced back to the Romantic movement of the nineteenth century (Silverman 1988; see also Silverman 1989, 37–39). What Silverman himself is after is quite the contrary: an analytic vigour –

in order ‘to distinguish the sociologist from the journalist’. Rejecting essentialism, and at the same time avoiding the dangers of relativism, he recommends a non-Romantic sociology which emphasises the form of representation and contexts.⁴

One version of such a Romantic approach is a rather vulgar realism (or essentialism in the sense given by Rorty), which takes autobiographies at face value and hardly poses at all the question of their status as life stories or as data. I could say that there has been such a tendency particularly in so-called ‘oral histories’ (see Thompson 1978; Chamberlain & Thompson 1998), where it has been thought that it is possible to present the hidden history – truth – as a counterbalance to the ‘history of victors’. Oral histories, for example, can present the viewpoint of some subordinated group like the working classes, ethnic groups or women, without worrying whether this (hidden) ‘truth’, too, is a historical story and should be dealt with as such.

To return to my illustrative case, another and slightly more critical realistic approach than the vulgar realism above has been presented by e.g. J. P. Roos. In Roos’ pioneering book *Suomalainen elämä: Tutkimus tavallisten suomalaisten elämästä* [Finnish life: A Study on the Life of Ordinary Finns] it appears that he is well acquainted with the theoretical problems of biographical research. Roos, however, remains almost indifferent towards these matters, and has few reservations about the truth validity of autobiographical data: ‘[Auto]biographies are the theory of life itself, true and authentic pictures of life as a whole’ (Roos 1987a, 30). Without paying any attention to this theoretically problematic stand Roos, on the basis of different typologies, then presents a historical description of ‘Finnish life’ which is itself, however, quite interesting. But here I have to omit the more detailed and substantial discussion of the results.⁵

In his biographical studies Roos has tried to get behind what he calls ‘the happiness barrier’ (Roos 1988a). It is a kind of façade – ‘an image of one’s life’ – behind which there is supposed to be

found the ‘true’ life, i.e. the real essence of one’s life (Roos 1987a, 214). Paradoxically, autobiographies do not in this case tell how things really are. Hence Roos has to adopt a double standard: ‘It is a reality behind which another, equally true reality lies’ (Roos 1988a, 162). Roos’s approach resembles a psychoanalytical reading of autobiographies: he tries to read what is between the lines or under the surface of the language or text, in e.g. ‘subordinate clauses’ – something that has not been said, the unspoken truth. But what is probably appropriate for psychoanalysis, does not necessarily apply to autobiographical research. The result is then, to my mind, a more or less moralising interpretation of autobiographies written by Finns and read by Roos from his own intellectual and autobiographical perspective – something like what is called an ‘ethnocentric bias’ in anthropological research. In sum, Roos’s sketch of Finnish life is a ‘grand narrative’ of Finnishness which, interestingly enough, is prone to see ‘miserable lives’ everywhere, and especially among Finnish males.⁶

Since the publication of *Suomalainen elämä* Roos has gone through a self-critical re-evaluation and changed his position at least somewhat, albeit not radically; rather he is going ‘back to real life’ after this self-critique (Roos 1994a; see in English Roos 1994b). While writing his *Suomalainen elämä* in the early 1980s Roos, of course, did not know about such remarkable contributions as Pierre Bourdieu’s ‘L’illusion biographique’ (Bourdieu 1986; in English Bourdieu 1987b) or Jerome Bruner’s article ‘Life as Narrative’ (Bruner 1987). But it appeared, later, that these texts did not particularly affect Roos or Bertaux (see Bertaux 1996, 3)⁷. On the other hand, it also seems that now after many critical discussions in the 1990s (e.g. Eakin 1992) there is no way back to the easy and uncomplicated view of autobiographies. What Roos now proposes is ‘a return to the original project to treat autobiographies as essentially reality- and truth-oriented narrative [...]’ – but he has to add: ‘from a perspective which is informed about the poststructuralist turn’ (Roos 1994b, 1).

Perhaps the current view of autobiographies held by many is best described by the French forerunner of autobiographical research, Philippe Lejeune, in his article ‘Autobiographical Pact [bis]’ from as early as 1981 – and as one can see it is not really without irony (Lejeune 1981, 132; here quoted after Eakin 1992, 24):

‘In the field of the subject there is no referent.’ [...] We *indeed know* all this; we are not so dumb, but once this precaution is taken, we go on as if we did not know it. Telling the truth about the self, constituting the self as complete subject – it is a fantasy. In spite of the fact that autobiography is impossible, this in no way prevents it from existing.

Roos writes in a similar fashion, though in a somewhat more ambiguous style than Lejeune:

We have lost our innocence, there is no paradise of true autobiography. Things may not be what they look like, there may in fact be drastically different. But still, it is not all interpretation. And most importantly, there is something outside the text, outside the representation, outside the spoken and written word. We may have to put our ideas on paper or into words if we want to communicate them, but we are still aware that there is something else, something that we know very well exists but which we cannot (or need not) reach, or express. It eludes us, but it is there. Because I am not a philosopher, I like to call it reality, real life. With practice, with hard work, with creative insights, flashes, we can advance in our project and get ‘closer to the real truth’. (Roos 1994b, 7)

This non-philosophical attitude of Roos’s interpretation earlier resembled more or less simple correspondence theories of truth (cf. von Wright 1968). Now, however, he seems to come to a more ambivalent conclusion, which metaphorically speaking I could call the X-Files (hypo)thesis: ‘The truth is out there.’⁸

Biographical fallacy

The above discussed biographical theory, here represented by J. P. Roos, according to which one's autobiography is interpreted as 'life itself' or 'real life', is to my mind based on the biographical fallacy. Following Rorty's distinction this theory could also be characterized as 'metaphysical' and 'essentialist'.

As far as I can see, it is nowadays very difficult to defend the realist interpretation of autobiographies – as one can see from Roos's standpoint discussed above. Bruner puts it bluntly: 'There is no such thing psychologically as "life itself" [...] Philosophically speaking, it is hard to imagine being a naïve realist about "life itself".' (Bruner 1987, 13)

In his article on 'the biographical illusion' Bourdieu casts even more serious doubt on the biographical research approach, which misreads life as a 'coherent and finalized, oriented whole', i.e.:

To speak of 'life history' implies the not insignificant presupposition that life is a history. As in Maupassant's title *Une Vie*, life is inseparably the sum of the events of an individual existence seen as a history and the narrative of that history [le écrit de cette histoire]. That is precisely what common sense, or everyday language, tells us: life as a path, a road, a track, with its crossroads (Hercules between vice and virtue), pitfalls, even ambushes [...]. (Bourdieu 1986, 69; Bourdieu 1987b, 1)

Such a conventional understanding of life implies tacit acceptance of a very traditional philosophy of history as a succession of historical events. It postulates life taken as a coherent whole and as a *curriculum vitae*. In fact, as Bourdieu points out, life is anything but coherent; it is contingent, discontinuous, rhapsodic, fragmentary, and so on – like the *nouveau roman* of, to choose the best examples, William Faulkner and Alain Robbe-Grillet, where the structure of the traditional novel is discarded.

Nevertheless, in autobiographical studies 'coherent' life stories

are taken naively at face value both by those individuals (interviewees) who tell their life stories and by those sociologists (interviewers) who study them. They are also constructed as coherent wholes by the sociologists of autobiography themselves.⁹

This inclination toward making oneself the ideologist of one's own life, through the selection of a few significant events with a view to elucidating an overall purpose, and through the creation of causal and final links between them which will make them coherent, is reinforced by the biographer who is naturally inclined, especially through his formation as a professional interpreter, to accept this artificial creation of meaning. (Bourdieu 1986, 69; Bourdieu 1987b, 2)

To put it briefly, according to Bourdieu, in sociological interviews and biographical studies people's lives have been incorrectly forced and reduced into a uniform and (chrono)logically advancing life course. For Bourdieu, however, a sociologist's job is specifically to object to this self-evident biographical genre (cf. also Broady 1990, 396–399; Bohler & Hildenrand 1995). In a nutshell Bourdieu's critique against biographical research is as follows:

Trying to understand a life as a unique and self-sufficient series of successive events (sufficient unto itself), and without ties other than an association to a 'subject' whose constancy is probably just that of a proper noun, is nearly as absurd as trying to make sense out of a subway route without taking into account the network structure, that is the matrix of objective relations between the different stations. (Bourdieu 1986, 71; Bourdieu 1987b, 5)

Hence, what Bourdieu is after is something more critical and sociologically ambitious; typical of his sociological thinking, he is looking for objective relations between events and agents, that is, a social space, or a field, in which they intersect. Bourdieu's critique of biographical research also serves as an example of French historical epistemology: we should give up metaphors of everyday life, and even all philosophical doctrines which are taken for granted, such as substantialist, realist and empiricist theories (Broady 1990, 399).

So far so good. I think Bourdieu gives good reasons for the critique of biographical research, and I very much agree with Bourdieu's critique. However, there is one problematic point in Bourdieu's argumentation with which I do not agree. It is Bourdieu's own solution, i.e. his *deux ex machina* to reduce (auto)biographies quite straightforwardly to social positions. In an interview on *Homo Academicus* Bourdieu formulates most explicitly his viewpoint of (sociological) truth:

This book is both an attempt to test the outer boundaries of reflexivity in social science and an enterprise of self-knowledge. I could sum this up by saying something quite banal but little remarked: the most intimate truth of what we are, the most unthinkable unthought [*impensée*], is inscribed in the objectivity, and in the history, of the social positions that we have held in the past and that we presently occupy. (Bourdieu 1989d, 25–6; cf. Bourdieu 1984c, 58)

In this respect, when discovering his objective truth (real essence) in social positions Bourdieu is also a metaphysician in the sense which we ascribed to Rorty.

Nowadays, it is not difficult to find in recent discussions similar critiques of the realist approach to biographical research (for a constructionist and even ironist position, see Willke 1993). On the other hand, it is not difficult to find informed realist positions. Robert Merton, although he does not in fact support this position, does, however, define 'sociological autobiography' as a 'narrative text', a topic in itself. According to Merton, autobiographers are in the dual role of participant-observer, i.e. both the author's own reflexive history and in the broader context of his or her times (Merton 1988, 18)¹⁰.

Having gone through, though rather cursorily, some central aspects of the contemporary debate on autobiographical research, I would now like to present my own proposal (concerning discussion of my earlier version, Rahkonen 1991, see Corsten 1994, Roos 1994 and Bohler & Hildenbrandt 1995). It is not quite as anti-biographical

as Bourdieu's. I hope it can serve as a fruitful starting point for a new autobiographical approach which will avoid the problematic points of the so-called realistic approach, such as the question of a 'true life story' and 'real life'. In presenting my own proposal I do not want to pretend that many critical things concerning the status and genre of autobiographies have not been discussed before; actually, there is quite a rich critical debate, for example, Paul John Eakin's important book *Touching the World: Reference in Autobiography* (Eakin 1992).

Autobiography as a kind of performative: true as such

My suggestion is to take autobiographies primarily as performatives or 'illocutionary acts' as defined philosophically by J. L. Austin (1962; see also von Wright 1968; cf. what Derrida says about autobiographies and their signature; Derrida 1984). Performatives are true as such. Typical performatives are utterances in the first person singular, the present tense. For instance, when a person says: 'I promise', he is actually making a promise. But third person 'he promises' is a descriptive sentence, which could be either true or false. The same applies to sentences in past tense.

To my mind, we could analogously to Austin's performatives think of autobiographies as *like* performatives – not true or untrue descriptions, but true as such. I would like to add that autobiographies are 'just like' or 'as if they were' performatives; in the strict sense of Austin they, of course, are not performative uses of language. On the other hand, if we read autobiographies as performatives and take them at face value as true stories, they are no longer primarily descriptions of one's life, or of 'real life'. Their reference or 'objectivity' lies in the phrase or story itself, for instance, 'this is my autobiography...' (x is P), not outside the story. Whereas, if we take the autobiography as a descriptive and cognitive story, we have to prove or ascertain that it (x is P) is true or valid,

i.e., so to speak, compare it with something ‘real’ (cf. Lyotard 1983, nos. 60–65) by (cross-)checking historical events or circumstances etc. – something that would often be very difficult if not impossible in practice (though it has been done to some extent in oral history studies). However, if we take the status of an autobiography in the performative sense (it is the *story* of the self, a representation of oneself and thus true as such), we can save ourselves from many problems implied by the realistic interpretation (e.g., is ‘x is P’ a true sentence?), to say nothing about problems involved with descriptive sentences in autobiographical texts, such as ‘on that day, in that place, it happened that x’ or a lot more complicated descriptions of one’s personal feelings, etc.

One might say that my proposal resembles the so-called ‘autobiographical pact’ presented by Lejeune (1975), i.e. a contract between author and reader about the author’s sincerity in writing his or her autobiography. But I would argue that my performative interpretation of autobiographies does not even require presuming any autobiographical pact at all. Then, of course, we have to give up the realist ambitions of constructing a ‘true’ story of people’s ‘real’ lives through autobiographical data – something which I think would be impossible anyway – and accept an uneasy non-realist, though easy performative view of autobiographies. I think in the end there is no other good alternative; as Clifford Geertz aptly put it: ‘Nobody’s under oath in autobiography [...]’ (Geertz 1995, 109). What comes after the fact, *ex post facto*, is not the fact, but, in this case, a life story which is a fact in itself in the performative sense. We do not then need the canons of autobiographical truth to be what they are. Hence autobiography is not only a performative in the above-mentioned sense, but also a kind of performance, like, say performative arts, not necessarily with artistic ambitions in the case of ordinary people’s life stories.¹¹

Secondly, as already said, my suggestion does not imply the total rejection of narratives like Bourdieu’s reductive solution. From

my point of view, we can accept that narrativity is the basic way of human experience, as Bruner (1987) says, which does not imply the assumption that this is the way things really are; however, this is the way people – and also some researchers of autobiographies – experience or understand them (as coherent, linear, chronological etc.). It is indeed still an interesting research project to study the narratives and the narrative patterns of biographies (cf. Burgos 1987). As is well known, there is a long and strong tradition of autobiographies and biographies; the story of a life reconstructing a past. Perhaps it is true that some kind of biographical understanding can be regarded as ‘a defining quality of the species’ (Pimlott 1998, 24). This narrative genre boils down to Christian scripture of Jesus’s life story and Greco-Roman culture (cf. Plutarch’s *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*); the modern genre of autobiography starting with Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Confessions*.

What remains?

Several interesting and challenging questions remain still open: Why does the common sense experience of life have such a strong traditional narrative pattern, unlike the *nouveau roman* (which has also theoretically aimed to meet the contingency of life)? Is the self really and at the deeply cognitive level narratively structured; is the chronological narrative the only way to comprehend ourselves and the world, so that we cannot live without it? Furthermore, taking autobiographies as performatives does not exclude studying them, so to speak, contextually or discussing the sociological characteristics and differences of autobiographers (cf. Bourdieu and Merton above).

The inquiry into the change of autobiographies’ character and meaning from the period of Enlightenment to our postmodern era is also an interesting topic. To give some examples: Autobiographies could be seen to have developed as a part of modern ‘techniques of

the self', as Michel Foucault (1984) put it; a human being is a confession-making animal, if not also an autobiography-writing species. And if Bourdieu (1987b, 4) compares sociological interviews to official inquiries, such as police investigations, I would rather say that as profane confessions they are an exercise in pastoral power without the promise of individual salvation (see also Hahn 1986). Perhaps we could say that the autobiography is a Protestant version of confession.¹²

In the final chapter of his book *Suomalainen elämä* 'Does Finnish life become empty?' (Tyhjentykö suomalainen elämä?) Roos discusses the destruction and degeneration of autobiographies and sees them as part of the question which concerns 'the mode of presentation' and 'the content of life' (Roos 1987a, 241). Such an interpretation is indeed somewhat paradoxical if we take into account the fact that modern autobiographies have a very traditional if not ancient narrative pattern. Undoubtedly, auto/biography has, however, along with history, changed its character, as shown by Liz Stanley (1993, 45) among others.

Autobiography as the creation or construction of the self rather than the representation of the self is also an idea worth taking into consideration (Stanley 1992, 60). One could even go further to speak about poetics in Nietzsche's sense. According to Nietzsche, reality is always our creation¹³ – and I would add that realism, too, is one way of constructing what is called reality. There is a fictional moment in reality: creation of reality is based on fictional, metaphorical means (cf. Welsch 1991, 172–173). In this sense autobiography could be said to have a poetic nature.¹⁴ Accordingly, oppositions like truth/poetry and fact/fiction become irrelevant. As Jean Baudrillard puts it, in his rather extreme way: '[What i]f it were not a question any more of opposing the truth to the illusion, but of perceiving the generalised illusion as more true than the truth?' (Baudrillard 1987, 89–90).

To conclude, realistic and romantic approaches to (auto)bi-

ography fall into the biographical fallacy by identifying life with life story. One strategy worth considering in order to avoid the biographical fallacy and other problems is to take biographies as performatives and to accept the fact that (auto)biographies are primarily texts with their own logic and narrative pattern, and not ‘wie es eigentlich gewesen ist’ Yet we do not need to throw (auto)biographies away; they are interesting data to study and fine objects for research, as I hope I have shown. And if we are to believe in Paul de Man’s statement, ‘Any book with a readable title page is, to some extent, autobiographical’ (Man 1984, 67–81), one could read, for example, Pierre Bourdieu’s work and even this book as autobiographical.

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5

Will to a Distinctive Life Style: In Search of the Finnish New Middle Class

In this chapter the way of life and essence of the Finnish new middle class are discussed. Within a theoretical framework that one might call Bourdieusian, our analysis is based on a questionnaire designed by Pierre Bourdieu in his book *La Distinction* (1979) and interview material¹ consisting of life stories of members from the Finnish new middle class. We have two problems: to offer a definition of the new middle class and to uncover its internal structure.

The problem of the new middle class

The new middle class is by no means a novel concept. It was apparently coined in 19th-century France. Early in the 20th century there were discussions about the new middle class in Germany, and in the 1940s the question was again taken up, e.g. in works by Schumpeter in Germany and by Heikki Waris in Finland. Given the air of something new, transient, and illusory that is conveyed in the concept, some authors (e.g. Boltanski 1982) have preferred the term ‘cadre’; others, like Pierre Bourdieu, suggest that ‘middle’ be discarded as meaningless and be replaced by ‘petty’: the ‘new petty bourgeoisie’. Additionally, there are those who prefer to speak of ‘strata’ rather than ‘classes’ (*nouvelles couches moyennes*, see e.g. Bidou et al. 1983; for all the possible varieties, see the discussion about the new middle class in the *Revue française de sociologie* (RFS) 1982–3).

However, there is no good reason why 'the new middle class' should be abandoned in favour of any of these alternatives; particularly not in the prevailing historical situation where the problem of the essence of the modern has once again come to the fore, partly in conjunction with the discussion of 'postmodernism'. Special mention can here be made of Daniel Bell's (1980) 'the new class' (designating the new middle class), a critical construction consisting of two elements: a new group of people, a new social stratum and, on the other hand, a 'modern' cultural attitude, a style that in a way dominates the contemporary discourse: the world of consumption, mass media, and the urban environment. This combination of two completely different elements means that it is extremely difficult to circumscribe the new middle class. The whole problem of circumscribing the new middle class is, however, among some scientists considered rather uninteresting; it is the new middle class itself that tends to define others out. 'Neither-nor', says Sulkunen (1984, 184), 'is the social determinant of this category'.

Our analysis is based on the current new middle class discussion in France, which has largely arisen out of Bourdieu's theory of domination and distinction (a theory without which any debate on the new middle class would be more or less pointless). Bourdieu's theory has become familiar to Nordic readers in a number of books and articles (Bourdieu 1984d and 1985; Broady 1983; Roos 1985b, Roos et al. 1983; Sulkunen 1982).

We need two instruments for our analysis of the new middle class: Bourdieu's model of 'bonne volonté culturelle' (cultural good will) and his concept of capital.

Bourdieu distinguishes between three general attitudes towards culture, each connected to a given class position: the dominant class has a 'sense of distinction', the middle class has a 'cultural good will', the lower classes are left with 'the necessary choice'. The culture-conscious middle class is in other words characterised by its unyielding efforts to adopt the predominant style in society – or to

oppose the dominant forms of taste in a way that immediately reflects the same taste.

Bourdieu's theory of distinction is based on two special elements: habitus and different forms of capital. Habitus refers to the system of dispositions that both generates and is generated by dispositions. Our habitus would then be based on all the situations that create dispositions during our lifetime. Therefore in order to determine someone's habitus we need to examine his life history in the light of its social determinants, e.g. the prevailing cultural structure. Habitus also comprises a given (economic, social, cultural, etc.) composition of capital.

Habitus is primarily an instrument for generating capital: with the 'help' of our habitus, we may increase our capital, resort to different kinds of capital for different purposes, etc. The concept of capital is thus particularly interesting in a study of the new middle class, for the starting-points out of which the new middle class has to create a new habitus vary broadly. What is more, it has to build a capital position either on the basis of capital that is not particularly well-suited for the purpose (e.g. when a member of the dominant class finds that a decline in social status has rendered part of his capital useless), or from a position where he has no capital to start with ('inherited' capital). In this case, he will have to build it up by himself, either through education or sometimes through his 'contacts' in business life or politics.

Taste as a basis for class distinctions

According to Bourdieu (1979, 9), taste is one of main battlefields in the cultural, reproduction and legitimation of power. Taste is the field of concealed exercise of power; it is a 'matter of course', the 'natural difference' that has grown apart from the social. Attempts at a scientific explanation of these self-evident relations, says Bourdieu, are usually denounced as pointless by people who have some-

thing to gain in mystifying the relation between taste and education (or some other social factors).

Bourdieu starts out with two sociological facts. First, there is a strong link between cultural capital and education even in those areas that are not part of the curriculum. And second, differences in taste cannot be explained on the basis of social background until we all have the same amount of 'educational capital'. From a sociological point of view, these facts are bound to seem trivial, as Bourdieu (1985, 40) himself notes. But very few serious and systematic sociological studies have so far been done on how this sophisticated distinction system works in practice (while on the other hand we have an abundance of material in the field of social anthropology and the history of civilisation, e.g. Elias 1976; Schievelbusch 1980). This then is where Bourdieu lends his most impressive contribution, especially in his *La Distinction: Critique sociale du jugement* (1979), a book that at the same time is a kind of 'vulgar critique' of Kant's aesthetics.

Bourdieu sees everyday life as a constant struggle over the final word in determining what is 'good', legitimate taste, a taste that at the same time is 'universal'. This struggle is a cultural game that no one can escape. For Bourdieu there are three different kinds of taste: the pure, legitimate taste, i.e. the taste whose cultural objects are legitimate (e.g. Bach, Bruegel, Goya, cinema d'auteur, etc.). This kind of taste is most often found in those fractions of the dominant class who have the greatest educational capital. The second kind of taste is the 'average taste' (le goût 'moyen'), directed to less valuable and more common objects (e.g. 'Rhapsody in Blue', 'Hungarian Rhapsody', 'Four Seasons', Utrillo, Renoir, etc.). And finally, the third taste is the popular or vulgar taste, which in Bourdieu's words is represented by 'serious music whose value has been inflated by its proliferation' (Bourdieu 1979, 16: e.g. 'Die blaue Donau' or 'La Traviata') and by popular music that lacks all artistic ambitions. Implicitly, this division comprises on the one hand a

‘counter-culture’, which according to Bourdieu, correlates either with the average taste or, in its most extreme form, with the legitimate taste and, on the other hand, with a complete ‘tastelessness’.

It is clear that these three kinds of taste are directly related to the habitus typology above: each taste corresponds to a habitus of its own. But taste is also a means of power: taste is an instrument of dominance for the dominant class. The dominant class, says Bourdieu, strives to distinguish itself from those representing other taste categories: the line of demarcation runs between the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’, the ‘barbarian’ taste. Which distinction is greatest at each moment of time is decided by the avant-garde group. At the stage where the popular taste finally comes to embrace what used to be good taste (e.g. ‘Four Seasons’ or Albinoni’s ‘Adagio’) it has turned from pure into vulgar taste.

This mechanism appears thus to bear a definite resemblance to Georg Simmel’s (1983, 34) description of vogue. Bourdieu and Simmel incidentally have quite a lot in common, more so than Bourdieu has been willing to admit. His reluctance can probably be explained by the fact that Simmel, a pioneer of ‘pure sociology’, has been used as a sledge hammer in the struggle between different sociological schools and trends in France.

The new middle class as a ‘cultural class’

Referring to both the French and Finnish discussion we shall describe in the following some general features that in principle distinguish the new middle class from other groups. Here we can refer to the discussion about the Finnish new middle class at a more general level.

A number of French sociologists have published a joint work on the new middle strata (‘les nouvelles couches moyennes’, Bidou et al. 1982). Here it is proposed that what holds together this group is a ‘modèle culturel’, common cultural features, ‘a whole of repre-

sentations, values, attitudes, behaviours'. If we are to get to the very heart of the new middle class, it is this cultural model that we have to examine.

One of the features traditionally attached to the new middle class is its *career orientation* (even though this does not as such distinguish it from the middle class): a determination to advance at work, to create a 'steady career' (see e.g. Sulkunen 1984). It is obvious that part of the new middle class, 'les cadres' (i.e. the middle stratum between top executives and lower supervisors in private enterprises and in state and municipal offices: sales managers, chief inspectors, etc.; see Boltanski 1982) are particularly interested in their career while others are not; that is, at least, not openly. One might rather assume that the representation model of the cultural new middle class tends to de-emphasise careerism: while it undoubtedly does exist, it is expected to be kept under wraps.

What is then definitely a universal feature of the new middle class is its orientation to out-of-work or *leisure time* and various leisure activities. It is not so much the activities as such that count: what matters most is belonging (or showing that one belongs) to a group that can freely dispose of its time. Where the individual's job does not allow maintaining this fiction, he orients towards leisure activities.

Cuturello's and Godard's (1982) study on home buying reveals an interesting point. What appears to be most important to a new middle class family in acquiring a privately-owned flat or house is getting it immediately without wasting any time. Traditionally the middle class family would tend to set out a clear long-term plan, save up for years and make sacrifices now to be able to enjoy themselves later. The proletariat, again, is characterised by a complete lack of long-term plans. The ideology of the new middle class is very simply, get what you want now, without delay without risks.

Bourdieu adds to this another interesting feature typical of the new middle class: *devoir du plaisir*. People feel that they have to

enjoy life, and that they are expected to do so according to given patterns. Wanting to get everything immediately is thus not so much an indication of short-sightedness as a reflection of a culture, of a life-style that is considered necessary and that forms a part of one's independence

Catherine Bidou also mentions in her recent book (Bidou 1984) some interesting features of the new middle class: e.g. a contradictory discourse of freedom and autonomy where the individual regards himself on the one hand as a 'small entrepreneur', as having 'no bosses', on the other as an integral part of the hierarchy, as a worker fighting the exploiters.

Bidou argues that this contradiction and ambiguity is an overwhelming feature that implies a reluctance to be classified in any way. The same contradiction can also be seen in the desire to both have one's cake and eat it too, to be safe and live dangerously, to be 'an adventurer in everyday life', as Bidou puts it.

This contradiction is linked in a very special way to rapid changes (upward or downward) in class positions. One of Bidou's interviewees uses the word 'fragilité' to describe the situation. Unlike one's parents one has no anchorholds.

Bidou further stresses the cultural modernity of the new middle class, the desire to be 'new' and different from the others. But, typically enough, this modernity requires nostalgic elements; the past is romanticised, especially if one has a bourgeois background.

All the factors we have discussed above are closely bound up with perhaps the most central feature of the new middle classes, one which is interestingly related to the traditional bourgeoisie: its need for a *representation*, a façade. The new middle class quite simply builds a suitable façade through a discourse whose contradictions are partly due to its artificial nature: it contains so many divergent elements that it just cannot collapse.

The hard core of this representational discourse can be condensed into two phrases: *neither-nor* and *both-and*. Sulkunen (1984)

has referred to the former as a central part of the new middle class's discourse, in which the refusal to be classified plays an important part. Both-and, on the other hand, is of significance for the positive discourse of the new middle classes. This applies in particular to the above-mentioned security-adventure contradiction. The idea that one really can both have one's cake and eat it is probably the most typical feature of the young, upwardly mobile new middle class that so far has had a smooth run. While this is a more universal feature, it culminates in the new middle class, and it is here that it is *most deep-rooted*. In the most extreme case it will never disappear.

Some general features of the Finnish new middle class

In data collection we used somewhat crude divisions for demarcating the new middle class: age (25–40), occupation (high-ranking employees in a 'new' kind of job), education (university degree) and residence (urban). The two main criteria are education and occupation. These cannot be determined definitely. Less important than the actual university degree is the role of education and less important than the occupation is the person's attitude to his job.

Whether or not we classified someone as new middle class was thus dependent not only on the background and educational level of the individual, but also on his or her orientation to life and work, the family's way of life, its moral norms, etc. Among our subjects there were cases that in terms of attitudes and development came very close to the traditional petty bourgeoisie. However, we have provisionally dealt also with these cases, mainly in order to show the distinction between the new middle class and the 'old' or traditional one.

The typical path to a new middle class position in Finland is via education: the parents of the person in question have been either smallholders or workers who have wanted to (or agreed to) educate their children to 'give them a better and easier life than their parents

have had'. This is then one point that distinguishes the Finnish new middle class from the French one, even though there are references in Bidou's (1984) book to similar situations.

The different features we discussed earlier are clearly visible in our material, too. However, before going into more detail about the typology we have worked out, we shall attempt to concrete some of these features as they appear in the Finnish new middle class.

As we saw earlier, an open career orientation is with very few exceptions rare: people tend to feel that they already have reached the position they have pursued. On the other hand, the other features we mentioned – the freedom and autonomy discourse, the neither-nor and both-and discourse – are very prominent, albeit in slightly modified forms compared to the French versions.

The most important feature is a careful *selection* between two or more alternatives.

The first choice that the middle class has to make is between an orientation to work or leisure. Even this choice, one which most men find themselves struggling with and which for women is basically a choice between the home and children or paid employment, is an important one for the new middle class (as part of the 'safe adventure'). A more radical problem is then the choice between the present career and something very different, something that 'one would really like to do'; something that, for instance, would require starting one's studies all over again. For women the very choice between children and work is in fact a radical one, given its consequences on their career. It is interesting that a number of women appear to be attracted by the alternative of staying home.

The desire to get everything at once is not particularly prominent, except perhaps in home saving: usually, people do not start saving until they have purchased their first home. In terms of consumption patterns, then, our interviewees can be clearly divided into two groups; a more ascetic and culturally oriented type and, on the other hand, a more consumption-oriented type. This distinction ap-

plies to all the types presented here, but it seems clear that it is the ascetic variant that will decline. Among those that fall under the ascetic type more or less involuntarily, the turn towards consumption comes at a relatively late stage, after some relief from the financial pressures of home saving and providing for one's children. But there are nevertheless clear signs of a strong consumption orientation among part of our interviewees, of a desire to satisfy one's needs immediately, even while one is saving up for a home.

So in most cases the trend of consumption is upwards. It has just taken its time. Even those who consciously hold their consumption level low can be expected to follow the general trend in consumer durables (car, dishwasher, video, home computer, etc.), holidays', and so on. This is quite simply due to the fact that the 'natural' income level of the new middle class, where both husband and wife are well-educated and in paid employment, is relatively high, whereas they are less inclined to save (with the exception of home saving).

The 'poverty trap' that these people are caught in before their children have grown up and before they have paid for their home will soon be a thing of the past. So for these people there are alternatives ahead: for example, a petty bourgeois way of life, or perhaps an even more drastic change such as moving to the country or to the archipelago, 'leaving the city way of life behind and burning one's credit cards'. All of these possibilities were mentioned in our material, at least as a discourse if not as a real choice.

The tastes of the Finnish new middle class

For Bourdieu, music is the field where the relationship between cultural capital and taste is most distinctly manifest; another place where distinctions are clear is in the art of painting. One might assume that in Finland these are not very telling indicators of the most typical Finnish taste, especially so in the new middle class. A

comparison with the legitimate taste is impossible because of the lack of data. Presumably, the Finnish literary taste would reveal more in this respect, at least in the new middle class.

It is, however, possible to see some common features with the French in our interviews. As far as we can tell, the taste of the Finnish new middle class is not as sophisticated as the corresponding taste in France. The two alternatives that were ticked off most often under music were 'I like all good music' or 'I like classical music but I'm not so conversant with music'. When we asked our subjects whether they knew certain pieces of classical music and their composers, very few appeared to be familiar with them. This was most striking with those melodies that may be classified as part of the legitimate taste (e.g. 'Das wohltemperierte Klavier' and 'Concerto pour la main gauche'; none of our respondents knew the latter). All, however, named their favourites: among the most popular were 'Four Seasons' and (Sibelius') 'Valse triste', both pieces of which there are several popular versions and which are often played in Finland

The group was very coherent in its views on popular music. The message was clear: the 'refined' was chosen instead of the most popular and/or folksy music. And while in classical music it is rather difficult to find anything but a vague attempt to follow the 'average taste', in popular music it is quite obvious that our group is not only coherent, but also makes a clear distinction between its own taste and the popular taste.

In the visual arts there are similar but less clear features in the new middle class's taste. Our interviewees have been to art galleries and museums more often than to concerts; the most popular answer was 'I'm very fond of the impressionists' or 'I am just as interested in classical as in abstract art'. The most popular artists were Gallen-Kallela, a well-known Finnish painter of the nineteenth century, Renoir, van Gogh, and finally da Vinci and Picasso. Nobody preferred Braque or Warhol; and only a handful mentioned Bruegel,

Dali, Kandinsky and Munch. The average taste (the safe taste) is in other words predominant here, and it is relatively far apart from the legitimate taste. There were no such differences in our material that Bourdieu noted in his study between e.g. those who liked Renoir (who represented a more traditional legitimate taste among those who had a greater economic capital) and those who liked Goya (the more avant-garde taste at the time of Bourdieu's study). Most of our subjects were inclined towards the safe average taste, while the few who opted for the more avant-garde alternatives could not be said to possess a greater cultural capital

Films were another central means of distinction in Bourdieu's study. In ours they were of much less importance. A partial explanation probably lies in the fact that many of our interviewees had small children and could therefore not go to the movies very often; more importantly, however, it must be noted that films are a much more central part of cultural life in France than in Finland. Here, films are classified as art only by the 'intellectuals'. Consequently, very few titles were mentioned, even though emphasis was clearly on the 'right' kind of films (Curtiz's 'Casablanca', Fassbinder's 'The Marriage of Maria Braun' and Saura's 'Carmen').

Bourdieu neglects literature almost completely. The answers to his much too general questions about literature suggest that both classical and modern literature are popular among our interviewees. Unfortunately, we did not add a list of Finnish and foreign authors to the questionnaire. Several studies about reading books in Finland suggest relatively strong distinction tendencies; it has also been shown that there is a group of authors that is highly esteemed by all (Eskola 1984), but none of these data have been analysed from a Bourdieusian perspective.

All in all, our analysis took us to the conclusion that the distinction tendencies with regard to high-brow culture are much less outstanding among the Finnish new middle class than among the corresponding group in France. Nevertheless, we should note that our

group, whose background in most cases was more or less proletarian, showed a keen interest in 'more refined' culture, which is evidence of a dramatic shift from their original cultural habitus. These changes imply that considerable investments have been made in cultural capital; investments that so to speak are from within the interviewees themselves, since these forms of cultural capital are not provided by the school or the home.

It is also worth mentioning that the socially 'declassed' persons among our interviewees did not have in any way a 'better' cultural taste or more cultural capital (although there were some signs of a 'more refined' taste especially with regard to films and music). This conclusion is in keeping with prior results from a study of 'the young lions', young business managers with an upper-class background; they had an astonishingly modest cultural capital, and it was hard to see any distinct features in their cultural activity and taste (Roos & Roos 1984). One possible interpretation here could be that while the value of the capital one has 'inherited' in this area might at present be about zero, it may prove usable later on. Another interpretation would be that in Finland the role of cultural capital is of special importance in comparison with social background.

A typology of the new middle class

Approaching the problem from the perspective outlined above, our typology of the new middle class is based on the overall social background – the original habitus – of the persons interviewed in relation to their present position. As Bourdieu has suggested, we have three basic combinations of a person's original and present habitus that are of decisive importance in determining his class positions.

- Those whose social career has been a distinctly upward one, either in comparison with their parents' position, or possibly

also with their own original position since completion of the first stage of education (e.g. elementary or secondary school and vocational school and later university studies). This can be said to be the dominant trend in development in Finland.

- Those whose position has changed relatively little: possibly from the old middle class to the new one, or from a middle-size smallholder to a fairly low post in the state or municipal bureaucracy (which are the typical situations in a highly urbanised society with an established middle class).
- Those who have experienced a social decline from a definite upper-class position to a social position that is rather difficult to define.

These basic alternatives immediately become more complex if we also take into consideration the social status of the interviewee's spouse. For example, the interviewee may be from a working-class or smallholder family, while the spouse may have a middle-class background. This was fairly common among our interviewees, and was spontaneously mentioned particularly in the case that the spouse had a different (higher) social background. At any rate, this imbalance plays a very significant part in shaping people's habitus, as we will see later.

Class position may also fluctuate. One of our interviewees had recently given up a lucrative job in an advertising agency to go back to work as a freelance and to resume his studies. The same applies to changes owing to divorce. But all in all the trend appears to be either rising, stable, or declining, since the very age of the interviewees and their present situation preclude all major fluctuations.

Our typology of the new middle class is based on two categorisations: 'class career' and 'intra-class orientations'. The former refers to habitus background, the latter to the alternatives available in a given basic position. That is, from one starting-point one can (and this is an important part of the essence of the middle class)

choose between various taste variants and ways of life. A third category we have paid less attention to (although it no doubt is also of considerable importance) is the stage in life.

Another aspect related to way of life that owing to the nature of our material cannot be adequately dealt with is consumption orientation. A more or less consumption-oriented alternative can be found in all the types discussed below; this may above all be explained by the average stage in life in our material, but as we mentioned more fundamental reasons can also be found.

An analysis of the factors underlying a given type of habitus must be based on a Bourdieusian analysis of capital. Home saving, for example, is the principal strategy for developing, economic capital. Education has been a major investment for all, but even here there are considerable differences: some have invested heavily in education from the very outset, others have joined in later.

They have also absorbed features from their home environment that against their middle class setting appear as weak or poor, but are translated into something else, or rapidly gain in strength. For example, an insecure social background may later unfold as a distinct orientation to home acquisition and as an ever purer petty bourgeois way of life.

The building blocks of our typology are in other words theoretical, but it can well be illustrated by our interview material. All three basic alternatives are represented among our interviewees, and it is possible in fact to find variation within these groups. However, our material does not allow more detailed distinctions on the basis of stage in life or consumption.

The socially declassed

The first two groups that can be formed on the basis of a class career – the socially declassed and those whose position has changed horizontally – can in the light of our material be considered as a more or

less coherent group. They had several features in common: all were men, all had a relatively weak education capital, all had had great difficulties in adjustment and in finding the 'right' position. They described their education as a series of mistakes and were presently looking for alternatives that would allow them to do something that they really wanted. But there were also some differences: in one case declassing had already taken place in childhood and caused several problems, in two others the interviewee was the family's black sheep. The original level of education was in one case outstandingly low, but the interviewee was at the time catching up.

Interviewees whose career was more horizontal had parents who were either salaried employees or well-to-do farmers; they had made greater investments in education and showed less hesitation. But basically there were almost no differences between the two subgroups: the discourse for both was a happy-go-lucky one. They are 'careless slackers' who have never learned (or are just about to learn) to take life seriously; 'he died without ever knowing that he lived'; or, as in one case where for an outsider the person's sailing boat appears to be more or less all that matters to him: 'Well, I do go sailing quite often, but it should not be all there is to life'; or 'I even bought our house without knowing for sure whether the loan would come through; but I still signed and thought, you know, everything will turn out OK...'.

If you look at the major decisions I've made during my life – education, my marriage, military service... I've done everything somehow rash. I mean there's no long-term plans in what I do... I went to the Swedish school of economics just because I thought it was a safe and posh place; it was nearby and I really fancied the idea of getting my degree. You know, all kinds of things that aren't really all that important. And actually that's how I got married. I just happened to like her and we enjoyed each other's company, so why not have a ball... Right now what I'm trying is to sort out some kind of meaning into my life, to set myself some goals. But then again that tends to tie you down...

This is the classical upper-class discourse, perhaps a slightly banal version of it; a version that appears in the aristocratic idea of complete freedom and versatility, but without too exhaustive a competence. One should never be a specialist, never absorb oneself in one thing only (e.g. work).

However, it is in the educational career that the ambiguous and care-free attitude most clearly presents itself – after all, it is because of it that we can speak about social decline. Almost all of our interviewees had had some kind of difficulties at school – even though all of them intended to continue to post-graduate studies. There is a clear correlation between how seriously one takes one's studies and the parents' position: those whose parents are marginally or distinctly middle class take their studies more seriously. But it is not until after high-school that the big problem comes: what to study? Either one just does not know what one really wants to do, or one fails to get into the field one prefers ('my problem is that I began in the wrong field').

Failure is a hard blow: 'It really gets you if you don't get in'. But even a fair leaving certificate and passing the entrance exams does not solve all the problems: 'I wasted five years at the university with natural sciences before I moved to the faculty of social and political sciences and really put my back into studying'. Another interviewee told us that he had in fact planned to go to a university in another town, but 'the weather was so marvellous (for sailing) in August that I just forgot the whole thing'.

These stories of search, failure, and a final change of course (or an indication of such) – where one has either adapted oneself to one's work (obtained on the grounds of one's education) and oriented oneself to something quite other than work, or started to re-educate oneself or created a career where education is of little importance – these are all as if taken from Bourdieu's descriptions of the new petty bourgeoisie. These people have realised, just in time, that there is no guarantee of their social position.

All have had job careers with ups and downs; they may have started from a fairly low position and made their way up in the same company. Most of them are still working on their career, trying to overcome the obstacles deriving from their aimlessness at the educational stage, e.g. by extension studies or by seeking positions that are relatively autonomous and above all hard to define. The reality of life, as they often put it, has at long last dawned upon them.

There are two predominant orientations, depending on the individual's basic strategy: either a positive orientation to work or an orientation whose focus is on everything but work (sailing, cultural activities, social life, marital life, etc.). What matters most is that they have complete control over those areas that are considered important. The essentialities of life are always under control, which is manifest either in a predictable career or in interests outside work.

There is also a measure of cadre consciousness in the orientation of work: career orientation is seen as a game with a healthy amount of risks, a game where personality and human relationships are vital, where success depends in part on how lucky you happen to be in the game:

My job is a responsible one, but very rewarding too. I'm free to do things as I please, just as long as I get the job done so far the feedback's been good... everything has been working out marvelously so much so that I'm really quite surprised, very surprised.

Economic questions are generally felt to be of minor importance: 'You can get whatever you want, provided you want it hard enough'. For instance, the housing career, a crucial element in the socially rising new middle class, is of much less importance for the declassed, even though some have had to finance their first home partly themselves. But generally the feeling is not that a house or flat provides basic security; it is more something that is taken for granted.

The types of the rising new middle class

We shall begin here with a type of the socially advancing new middle class that differs both from the socially declassed and, to some extent, also from the new middle class in general, namely the type of *petty bourgeois orientation*.

Among the petty bourgeoisie home saving has developed into something of an art. After getting married, the petty bourgeois family will buy a small flat, save up for a while and then move on to a slightly bigger flat, and so on. Finally, after four or five moves, they will have reached a fairly high housing standard. But all of this has required great sacrifices. The family has led a disciplined, thrifty life; they have continuously had problems with arranging their children's day care, suffered from a constant lack of time, always been tied down by something. This is at startling variance with the third and last type, the ambivalent group. Here, people openly discuss different alternatives, dream of a different life, or change – which the petty bourgeois definitely do not, at least openly. Rather, they tend to say:

I don't think that I really have missed any great opportunities... I think I've had a good life. I haven't really made any of my big choices consciously, but then I've always noticed later on that what I'm doing here isn't all that bad. I've never felt that I should be living differently.

This petty bourgeois way of life appears to be often related not only to the individual's low social background, but also to the spouse coming from a different background. The interviewee's spouse has a bourgeois middle-class background to which she has, however, adapted herself rather easily.

Meals are very important to us. On Saturdays and Sundays we usually have something special. We lay the table: tablecloth and candles and all, and really enjoy ourselves. The children too think it's important. It's really one of the special moments of the week. In the

winter we light the candles and put on some nice music. And talk about things – we see very little of each other during the week.

This type also lavish attention on their children. The children take music lessons, play the piano or flute, join the scouts. The parents like to see their children read a lot. As such this is not distinctive of this type only, except that here, in accordance with the traditional bourgeois model, it is the wife who assumes the main responsibility for ‘cultural education’ of the children. Otherwise *all* the types of the new middle class show some traditional bourgeois features.

The second type, the *resigned* one, is relatively similar to the petty bourgeois type; in fact they may to some extent be regarded as two variants of the same development schema. The resigned individual differs from the petty bourgeois type mainly in his relation to consumption, in a less positive discourse as regards his own general situation, and lesser investments in the home. But the similarities are indeed striking: their social background is by and large the same, neither expect drastic changes in life, both claim that they are satisfied with their life, both underline the importance of self-discipline in life. The petty bourgeois type has perhaps developed many of these features further than the resigned type. The latter is also a borderline case between the new middle class and the old middle class. What we often have here is a combination of ascetic living habits and consumption, on the one hand, and a work ethic whose values and thought patterns are distinctly petty bourgeois on the other. Behind this asceticism we often see a relatively difficult starting position, at any rate an outstanding social rise and a definite feeling that one’s success is self-made. Unlike the career-oriented, self-made type, still determined to continue his climb, the ascetic type tends to be satisfied with his position. He feels that he has done his share – and that will have to do:

As far as work goes I think I’ve no ambitions. In my present job or any work, for that matter. Because once you’ve reached a certain a level... perhaps it’s just weariness.

Sometimes women say that children are the reason for this change in attitude: others find some activity outside the home that becomes more important than the career.

There has always been a shortage of alternatives in life. 'What is life but a series of compromises.' A poor childhood, memories of hardship, perhaps a drop out from school. In any event there is a conscious avoidance of setting high goals. Both marriage and home saving involve further limitations.

This type of resignation is congruent with unpretentious life habits and a relatively low level of consumption. Too much is demanded of oneself, no liberties are allowed for oneself.

Concentration on certain aspects of life is another distinctive feature of the resigned type: one has had to invest energies in education (because of an earlier failure or interruption), or every effort is devoted to home saving.

The resigned type typically places little emphasis on work: it is not particularly interesting. The whole subject is omitted in discussions. Asceticism is not a result of (or related to) workaholism. quite the contrary.

The *career-oriented*, quickly-rising new middle class has typically been a male phenomenon. Today the picture is different: most of the career-oriented cases climbing fastest in social status are women.

Two different categories may be distinguished in the career-oriented group: those who have learned to exploit 'contacts' and build their careers on social capital, and those who work extremely hard to build a career. The latter is best known in the business world where (it is said) the best way to outstrip others is by an enormous work capacity, intelligence, and self-reliance. In the case of the new middle class things are complicated by the fact that careerism is expected to be kept more or less under wraps.

A feature that all of these cases have in common is a relatively low social background. Most come from farmer families where they

often learn that ‘everyone carves out his own destiny’ and that everyone has to take care of himself in the struggle against society, as in the old days against the forces of nature. There is also a tendency to stress the role of the home: a friendly atmosphere, support from parents, and a feeling of security.

The school, too, has encouraged self-dependence. Despite many difficulties (a long way to school, having to live away from home), they did well at school, and it was clear from the very beginning that they would continue to the university. There was little hesitation in making decisions at different stages, and they feel they definitely chose the right field of study (even though this need not necessarily be the case). From a very early stage they have known what their future will look like and have consciously paved the way for their later careers; their political choices have, for instance, been made with an eye to this perspective. In two typical cases the persons had inherited leftist views from their home, and at the time of the study (in the mid-1970s) the most natural thing for them would have been to join the then powerful communist movement. ‘I was very nearly drawn into the communist student movement, but my inherent cautiousness won... and I joined the social democrats, which at the time were in the minority.’

Many were active in the students’ union. They worked themselves up to leading positions in the union, which brought extensive social interaction in the university. This proved very helpful at the early stages of their career: the first post (in public administration) was secured with the help of one’s friends and colleagues.

Although career is important (‘I’m not just going to sit and wait for my pension’) the main focus of interests is very clearly elsewhere. Care is taken that work does not become too central a part of life: ‘By and by work will take its proper place.’ The real, interesting life is outside work, but also outside the family (‘it’s too small a circle and I just won’t let myself be captured by it, it just isn’t good’).

In the odd case this caution may be stretched to the point that one is reluctant even to be tied down by home saving. A good, secure rented flat is often preferred. The family's income is spent on living a good life: holidays, eating in good restaurants, buying paintings and furniture: 'That's how I'd like to spend my money – in living and travelling, and in making my home nice and cosy.'

There is an ambivalent relation to social background: workers are generally considered to be very restricted:

By all means pay them as much as us; the problem is that they don't know how to spend their money, except on liquor... and squandering, they simply don't know how to enjoy life. I don't know whether it depends on their limited education or something else. But they simply lack the skills of enjoying life. Their sphere of interest is much narrower.

What is interesting in this quotation is that the interviewee comes from a proletarian family with extreme left-wing sympathies.

As a consequence of the view that the family may be very binding, it is very rarely mentioned: the wife is also in paid employment, it was a good thing that she chose to go to work – and that's about all that is said. Family life is not very important.

By and large all has gone well so far; one has been lucky and successful in everything. Thus there is perhaps little risk of stagnation, at least this is how they put it.

The last of the main categories is the *ambivalent* type. These people are characterised by some degree of dissatisfaction with their present situation, even though from an objective point of view they appear to be in a very good position. They have a good job, a high income level, they have good prospects for promotion, high expectations, but at the same time they would like to try something else, to venture out on something new.

The people that fall into this category are at different stages of the process that begins with a given discourse concerning different alternatives of living, which is also to some extent typical of those

dedicated to their career. Some are just about to take their first step, others have come much further; some have already made the decisive choice. All in all, there are only a few who go all the way to taking up two jobs (white-collar/farmer), who start with completely new studies, who give up a well-paid job, etc.

We believe that this weighing of two alternatives is particularly typical of the new middle class, if compared e.g. with the petty bourgeois and ascetic types. The career-oriented type, by contrast, seems to have some misgivings as to what is really important and comes thus very close to the ambivalent type. The difference is that their representational strategy prevents them from openly admitting such ambivalence.

The most straightforward choice that one wish to have is probably between work orientation and leisure orientation. However, even this choice (which as mentioned is one that most men are struggling with and which for women is basically a choice between home/children and paid employment) is important for the new middle class. A more difficult choice is between the present career and something that 'one would really like to do' and that requires a new education or, in the case of women, choosing between staying at home or building a career, a choice that most women appear to be working on, despite what is said about women invading the labour market.

There is a feeling that one has drifted into certain decisions: 'Somehow it has all come down to buying your share of worldly wealth and getting a house with a loan and what not, and you find yourself living in this downright petty bourgeois environment'; which means that the once cherished left-wing ideals have faded away. But in a way it is these ideals that explain the doubts about the present situation and especially about the future.

For the first time in my life I've begun to think that, you know, something must be done... My job has always been very important to me – a challenge... Right now I'm pretty satisfied with my life, in

many ways I think I'm privileged. But then again you should be able to do something to change the outer appearance or form of your life...

Among women this contradiction usually arises in discussions about their children. An interesting job takes too much time and energy for enough to be left for the family. This has meant a continuous conflict between the demands of the children and the family on the one hand, and work, on the other. Something has to be done to solve this conflict.

When our first child was born, I started to see life somehow differently. Work shouldn't be all there is to it, you must find the time for several other things too. Especially the children...

An interviewee tells us about an acquaintance of hers who has given up his job and started writing:

That's exactly what people should do. When I think of myself, I think it's strange if I don't find the courage to give up my job and stay at home with the children... It sure would be a big change for us if my husband began to work independently... actually I have plans of my own also... I have my loom... I could start doing something, I mean handiwork... all it takes is the courage to make the decision.

A discourse such as this is not, however, very consistent, as we see in the quotation above. While on the one hand one tends to focus on one's career, there are also plans to continue studies, hopes are high that one's spouse would slow down a bit, and the possibility of his becoming a private entrepreneur is also considered. It is not at all clear what one really wants to do, or where one is heading.

As we mentioned earlier, the new middle class wants both to have its cake and eat it; to feel safe and live dangerously; to be an adventurer in everyday life. However, it is mainly the ambivalent type that has made it a maxim of life.

Successes are not emphasised in this discourse; for example, home saving is not so important, even if one already has reached the

ultimate goal, a house of one's own. In other words, things that seem to be important elements of success for the petty bourgeois type are here something of a façade.

Preliminary conclusions

We could perhaps compare the new middle class with a 'free-floating intelligentsia' (*'freischwebende Intelligenz'*) who reflect upon their situation without being tied to any specific social position. This latter is the case among those who in Bourdieu's words 'choose the necessary' or follow plain traditions. What distinguishes the new middle class from the intellectuals is then the nature of reflection: the new middle class reflects upon the relations between family – children – work – leisure (i.e. the way of life) and its alternatives, not on philosophical or social syntheses or positions.

The problem of the new middle class is a problem of *commitment*: to whom ought one be loyal? One aspect of this is the phenomenon we found in our typology: the new middle class seems to be gliding on the one hand towards a 'proletarian resignation' (the problematic passive worker of leftist parties and trade unions), on the other hand towards a traditional petty bourgeoisie (but in some cases also towards the dominant class). But what is most distinctive of the new middle class's position is its floating, obscure, transient nature. Those who a few years ago filled the universities are now filling the ranks of the new middle class. The question is whether they are going to stay here either: whether the new middle class will establish itself, become something that need not be called new, or whether it will remain a transient phase in the life cycle of the baby boom generation; in this case the term new should be abandoned in favour of some more appropriate one.

We may also ask here whether the new middle class reflects something new which could be called 'modernity; this concerns in particular the group we call the ambivalent persons. This could be

objected to by saying that an ambivalence of the kind described earlier is a general phenomenon which is typical of a certain stage of the life cycle and has nothing whatsoever to do with class or modernity.

However, we believe that this is not the case; we argue that the substantial problems of the ambivalent type are something specific with regard to both class and modernity. It *is* modern to assume that one can choose freely, be autonomous, choose one's life style on the basis of criteria such as self-realisation or a varying time structure (even though their time budget is in fact very tight). During earlier times in history only a very small minority had this possibility, now it is part of the class problems, a problem concerning a growing number of people.

In any case, we feel it is reasonable to argue (on a more or less tentative basis) that taste is by no means as important a strategy of distinction for the new middle class in Finland as it is in France, if we are to believe Bourdieu or those who have been particularly concerned with the new middle class. In the Finnish new middle class emphasis is rather, on subjectivity, on personal relationships and their therapeutic nature, on the way of life in a broader sense. However, we feel it would be premature to abandon the strategies of distinction in the analysis of the new middle class in Finland. Also, we may say that our group does not represent the modern American phenomenon of 'yuppies' with their highly advanced consumption habits and their strong career orientation (cf. 'The Year of the Yuppie' in *Newsweek*, December 1984).

These conclusions of ours must in the future be examined against material that focuses more on those areas of taste that presumably are more relevant in Finnish circumstances, e.g. literature, highbrow and popular aspects of television and theatre tastes; also, we would need a more profound analysis of the new middle class's life style as a whole.

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Conclusion

This study grew out of independent sub-studies originally written as articles with the common theme of Bourdieu's thinking. It goes without saying that it has not been the purpose of this book to give a full account of Bourdieu's *oeuvre*. Bourdieu's work is much too complex and rich; and it would have taken a much longer book, if not a series of books. The aim, therefore, has been less ambitious. By focusing on certain themes of Bourdieu's sociology, as well as on some experimental trials inspired by Bourdieu's work, this study has attempted to provide ouvertures – openings and introductions – in order to gain a better understanding of Bourdieu's *oeuvre*. Certain dominant, partly overlapping, features are observable, such as Bourdieu's concepts of struggle, domination, taste, field, intellectuals, and so on. In a sense these concepts were both critically evaluated as well as elaborated throughout the whole study. The applicability of some of them was also tested in case studies (Chapters 3 and 5).

In sum:

In Chapter 1 an attempt was made to apply Bourdieu's sociological 'model' to himself through looking at his intellectual biography and addressing Bourdieu's place in the field of *homines academici*. It was argued that there is a paradox in Bourdieu's thought: on the one hand, he develops his own reflexive sociology, i.e. a sociology that is disinterested or free of interests; on the other, Bourdieu's reflexive sociology, which is also the sociology of knowledge and power,

shows that nothing is disinterested – except his sociology. Free from resentment, Bourdieu then thinks that he can generously afford to look at things disinterestedly, i.e. scientifically and reflexively.

In effect, it was contested, Bourdieu himself cannot escape the classical problem of ‘a free-floating intellectual’, ending up in precisely that position. Ultimately, the main aim was to show that knowing there is a clear connection between Bourdieu’s thinking – that is, his reflexive sociology as well as his programme as an intellectual – and his intellectual biography, makes his sociology more comprehensible in many respects.

In Chapter 2 a comparison between Pierre Bourdieu’s and Friedrich Nietzsche’s conceptions of taste was presented. The thesis was that there is an interesting resemblance between Bourdieu and Nietzsche in such matters as taste, struggle, resentment and more generally in matters of power (‘the will to power’). With the help of this comparison some aspects of Bourdieu’s thinking were explicated. It was shown that Bourdieu sees society primarily as a battlefield of symbolic power, an eternal struggle which one cannot avoid. It was claimed that like Nietzsche, Bourdieu could say: society is the will to power – and nothing besides. Nevertheless, according to Bourdieu, there is also the will to truth, which is foremost.

Chapter 3 dealt with Bourdieu’s ‘field theory’ of intellectuals, with specific application to the problems of a marginal field, that of Finland. The theory was further discussed with data from a Finnish questionnaire on the concept of the intellectual and the leading intellectuals in Finland. An outline of the Finnish intellectual field was presented, and was compared with the intellectual field of France, i.e. a country of intellectuals *par excellence*. Our analysis indicated that there were interesting structural similarities – i.e. a certain homology – between the two very different cultures.

Moreover, it was shown that a specific feature of Finnish intellectuals has, for historical reasons, been their dependency on the state. The connection between the university and politics has been

very close in Finland. Today this connection has perhaps become less tight, but especially between academic intellectuals and the state the connection was still a close one in the 1980s. At the same time, as we had shown in the case of celebrity-intellectuals, Finnish intellectuals are more and more dependent on the media, i.e. the latest development in the history of intellectuals. However, contrary to the trend in other West-European countries, in the late 1980s the concept of intellectuals was still a sensitive subject in Finland, as the responses to our query showed.

In Chapter 4 autobiographical research was discussed from a theoretical and methodological point of view inspired by Bourdieu's thesis of the 'biographical illusion'. It was noted that as narratives autobiographies have a very traditional pattern. On the other hand, it was pointed out that the so-called 'realistic' conception of life stories, J. P. Roos's studies serving as an example, taking the autobiography as 'real life' itself, is very problematic. It was argued that the story of one's life and its narrative pattern do not meet the contingency of life.

As a strategy for avoiding the biographical fallacy it was suggested that the fact that life stories are primarily texts with a logic and narrative pattern of their own be accepted. Furthermore, a proposal was presented to take autobiographies as 'performatives' as philosophically defined by J. L. Austin. In conclusion, it was noted that this does not imply we should reject all (auto)biographies; they are still interesting data to study.

Chapter 5 concerned the 'new middle class' and its life style in Finland. Within a Bourdieusian theoretical framework, the analysis was based on a questionnaire by Pierre Bourdieu in his book *La Distinction* (1979) and interview material consisting of life stories of Finnish new middle class people collected in the early 1980s. Our analysis was also based on the current new middle class discussion in France, which has largely arisen out of Bourdieu's theory of domination and distinction.

As a conclusion, it was argued that taste was by no means as important a criterion for the new middle class in Finland as it was in France. In the Finnish middle class emphasis was rather on subjectivity, on personal relations and their therapeutic nature, i.e. on the life style in a broader sense. It was also argued that the so-called 'ambivalent type' of the new middle class was something specific with regard to both class and modernity. Finally, it was considered premature to abandon the strategies of distinction in the analysis of the new middle class in Finland, and a more profound analysis of the new middle class's life style as a whole was suggested.

Finally, as stated in the Introduction, at the moment it seems that Bourdieu is definitively in his heyday as a sociologist and as an intellectual. And certainly he has not yet said his last word on sociology or on the intellectual field. Neither is the discussion on Bourdieu's thought over. As the saying goes, the struggle goes on.

Notes

Introduction

1. Apart from numerous articles and debates inspired by Bourdieu in French newspapers such as *Le Monde*, *Le Monde diplomatique* and *Libération*, several theme issues (dossiers) have been published on Bourdieu in French magazines: *L'Événement de jeudi* (27 August – 2 September 1998), *Le Nouvel Observateur* (N° 1765, 3–9 September 1998) and *Magazine littéraire* (N° 369, October 1998) plus series of interviews with Bourdieu in *Télérama* (July–August, 1998). Bourdieu's short polemical books (Bourdieu 1996a; Bourdieu 1998a) have been translated into English recently: *On Television and Journalism* (Bourdieu 1998e) and *Acts of Resistance: Against the New Myths of Our Time* (Bourdieu 1998f).
2. When Anthony Giddens evaluated the state of contemporary sociology (Giddens 1995, 18–20), he named Pierre Bourdieu and German sociologists Niklas Luhmann and Ulrich Beck as the leading sociologists of today. According to Göran Therborn (1995, 264) John Rawls is the only American who for the time being has equal theoretical influence as Bourdieu, Foucault, Giddens and Habermas. Klaus Lichtblau in his 'Zeitdiagnose' (Lichtblau 1991, 10) has for his part mapped out the most important contemporary sociologists as follows: Habermas and Luhmann in Germany, Giddens in Britain, Bourdieu and his 'school' in France, and Jeffrey Alexander's neofunctionalism in the USA.

At the ISA XIV World Congress of Sociology in Montréal, in summer 1998, an opinion survey was presented which the ISA Congress Programme Committee had carried out in 1997 in order to identify the ten most influential books for sociologists (ISA members were asked 'to list five books published in the twentieth century which were most influential in their work as sociologists'). Reflecting Bourdieu's international status, among the 'Top Ten' Bourdieu's *Distinction* was in sixth place (before Bourdieu there were only: Weber with two books, Mills, Merton, and Berger and Luckmann).

The reception of *La Distinction* was a distinct success in France, where

it sold over 100,000 copies. Furthermore, there are few works which have been reviewed by so many prominent sociologists, such as Mary Douglas (1981), Jon Elster (1981) and Anthony Giddens (1986). *La Distinction* arrived in Finland exceptionally quickly after its publication in France. It was reviewed by J. P. Roos (1980), though it did not reach a larger sociological audience in Finland until the English translation in 1984. It should be mentioned that in his review Roos concentrated almost exclusively on Bourdieu's empirical contributions, though he also anticipated *La Distinction* becoming a '101% classic'.

Chapter 1: Pierre Bourdieu as Homo Academicus

1. This idea, also called a performative contradiction, has been pointed out, though only in passing, by Arto Noro in his review of the Finnish translation of Bourdieu's *Questions de sociologie*, suggestively entitled 'Disinterested unmasking of interestedness?' ('Pyyteellisyyden pyyteetön paljastaja?'; Noro 1985).
2. In a conversation we once had in Paris Bourdieu suggested to me that I could do the same to Nietzsche as he had done to Heidegger. (Bourdieu's personal communication to the author, 5 October 1995, Paris.)
3. Hans-Georg Gadamer wrote an interesting book review of the German translation of Bourdieu's book on Heidegger in *Philosophische Rundschau* 1979 (see Gadamer 1995, 46–53), in which he starts with a remark that in order to be able to evaluate Bourdieu's book, one should really be a sociologist. Although rather critical, Gadamer emphasises that Bourdieu's critique was quite fruitful (Bourdieu's 'gesamte Unternehmen [...] in mancher Hinsicht fruchtbar geworden ist'; Gadamer 1995, 52–53).
4. In his essay collection *Choses dites* Bourdieu has published this interview by Honneth et al. in French with the English title 'Fieldwork in philosophy' in quotation marks. In a passus (Bourdieu 1987a, 40) which is not included in the German or English version (Honneth et al. 1986a; 1986b), he refers to J. L. Austin from whom the title comes. Although Bourdieu does not give any reference to Austin's writings, the phrase 'Fieldwork in philosophy' can be traced and found in Austin's 'Presidential Address to the Aristotelian Society' in 1956, where Austin states: '...we should be certain of what we are after: a good site for *fieldwork* in philosophy' (Austin 1970, 183). Bourdieu is also attracted by another concept of Austin's, namely the 'scholastic view' (Bourdieu 1987a, 25), in Austin's *Sense and Sensibilia* (Austin 1962, 3–4).
5. According to Webster's *Third New International Dictionary of the English Language*, Unabridged (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam 1971), 'oblate'

means among other things: ‘1 *Roman Catholicism*: one offered or devoted to the monastic life or to some special religious service or work: *a*: a child dedicated in his or her early years by the parents to the monastic life *b*: one of a class of persons who have offered themselves and their property to a monastery in which they live 2 *usu cap. Roman Catholicism*: a member of one of the religious orders devoted to a particular work.’

6. A good detailed description, with similar feelings to those of Bourdieu, of school days at the École Normale, and also in preparatory classes in major *lycées* in which students prepare for two years for the entrance examinations to the *grandes écoles*, is also found in Didier Eribon’s biography of Michel Foucault (Eribon 1989). The same goes for Michel Serres, who is of the same generation as Bourdieu (b. 1930) and was at the École Normale in the early 1950s; Serres writes: ‘At the École Normale Supérieure, like elsewhere [in the French post-war milieu], terror reigned. [...] I have memories of the École that are almost as terrifying as those of the war [...]’ (Serres 1995, 5).
7. This role of an outsider somewhat contradicts what Bourdieu says in another context about ‘scholastic illusion’ (Bourdieu 1997b, 266), i.e. the illusion of singular experience, cognitive privilege and the myth of the ‘impartial spectator’ or ‘stranger’ according to Georg Simmel (to whom Bourdieu himself refers).
8. Generally speaking, correspondence analysis is primarily a technique for representing the rows and columns of a two-way contingency table in a joint plot, e.g. on a two dimensional map. In France the technique called ‘correspondence analysis’ dates back to the French mathematician Jean-Paul Benzécri’s project in the mid–60s, often known as the ‘analyse des données’ (Benzécri 1973; Benzécri 1992). But the technique is also said to be a special case of canonical correlation – analysis for contingency tables as developed by Ronald A. Fisher in 1940. Benzécri also refers to Louis Guttman as his predecessor (i.e. the so-called Guttman’s scale). Benzécri and his colleagues developed a ‘geometric variant’ of factor analysis which they named correspondence analysis, which they thought to be especially suitable and applicable for social sciences (for details see e.g. Broady 1990, 492–534).

Correspondence analysis has been relatively little used in social science research outside France. If known at all, it is considered a special French variant of principal component analysis. In France it is so dominant that when French sociologists talk about factor analysis, they usually mean correspondence analysis (see e.g. Cibois 1983; Cibois 1984). It is nowadays commonplace for the French press to include correspondence maps in their articles on topics such as voting behaviour. Interest in the use of the technique among British and American sociologists seems to have remained slight until the publication of Greenacre’s text (1984) and the easier

availability of appropriate computer software. Among several textbooks in English see: Greenacre 1984; Greenacre 1993; Greenacre & Blasius 1994.

The *locus classicus* of sociological correspondence analysis is Bourdieu's *Distinction* (Bourdieu 1979). One may also find interesting Bourdieu's argument concerning his 'epistemological' use of statistics in the article 'Anatomie du goût' (Bourdieu & Saint Martin 1976). See also the Appendix to Chapter 3 on the field of intellectuals in this book.

Chapter 2: Taste as a Struggle: Bourdieu and Nietzsche

1. There is also another interesting difference between the French and English cover illustrations of Bourdieu's *Distinction*. Bourdieu chose the picture for the cover of the edition (Bourdieu 1979) after having seen it 'in Budapest' (Bourdieu's personal communication to the author, 16 March 1994). In this French edition, the picture is an old painting by 'G. Schalcken, *Le gourmet*, from the Gallerie nationale de Prague' [pro: Schalcken, Godfried (1634–1706)], which shows a fat man, a gourmand, stuffing his mouth with great pleasure.

The picture on the cover of the English edition, about which Bourdieu had no say (in fact, he did not like it; Bourdieu's personal communication to the author, 16 March 1994), there is a detail from the well-known painting, *Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* by Georges Seurat (1884–86; cf. Rahkonen 1989, 272–74; Bloch 1959, 953). It portrays (with irony?) a bourgeois Sunday, but a boring one without any *joie de vivre* whatsoever.

Perhaps these differences in the pictures on the cover manifest the cultural differences of French and British societies – that is, if the picture on the cover of the English editions is not just a British stereotype of France. One interpretation would be that there are genuine social and cultural differences between British and French societies. Britain may be considered a more straightforward or rough society, whereas in France there may be more sophisticated, 'hidden' class distinctions.

There is another astonishing feature in the original picture on the cover, and that is the old-fashioned gourmand himself. This, of course, goes back to the genealogy of taste (cf. Falk 1994, 13–15; Gronow 1997), but the results of Bourdieu's book suggest rather that the biggest differences in taste are found in the taste of music. In this sense a more suitable picture on the cover might have reflected this fact.

2. Gerhard Schulze has introduced an interesting new viewpoint to this discussion. In his ingenious book *Die Erlebnisgesellschaft* (1992) Schulze discusses *Erlebnis* which might be translated as subjective experience, as opposed to *Erfahrung*, an objective experience (cf. Lash 1994, 163). –

Schulze points out that *Erlebnis* is directed in particular at beauty. Beauty, he argues, (no longer used in the Kantian sense of the word as a judgement) is a uniting concept for valued experience (in German ‘schön’; in English e.g. ‘nice’). ‘Beautiful’ may just as well be washing one’s car, or Rilke’s sonnets, and vice versa, both of them might be equally banal. In another context (Schulze 1993, 15–16) Schulze maintains that a change has occurred in the way of speaking and discussing. The new manner of speaking about arts and culture is laconic. Speaking is limited more and more to ‘how I feel’ and to expressions like ‘great’, ‘fine’, ‘super’, ‘hype’, ‘cool’ etc. (cf. above the Rolling Stones: ‘...(but I like it)’). The same vocabulary characterises one’s holiday, a friend’s new girl- or boyfriend or a cocktail party.

Answers to the question concerning the judgement or valuation of culture or arts sound the same as answers to the question: ‘How are you?’. When we are asked about how we value – in fact the question itself has a colloquial sound: did we like or fancy it – a piece of art, we reply how we feel about it. Basically, we do not really talk about art, but ourselves, not about the piece of art, but its effect on us. We do not discuss about the quality of art in the objective sense, but liking or disliking. The subjectivity becomes clear in differences of opinion: I like that film, you do not. It is enough that we know and state this – there is no need for an aesthetic or theoretical dispute about the subject. The subjectivity of opinions is approved as such; thoroughly subjective aesthetics has won. Something appeals to one person, but not to another. Certainly, there is no dispute about tastes any longer (see also Müller 1992b).

I think Bourdieu could accept Schulze’s analysis of the everyday anti- or a-aesthetics, but he would perhaps like to add that sociologically subjectivity goes back to objective social and basically hierarchical positions. The difference between Bourdieu and Schulze is that, according to Schulze, consumption creates classes, ‘milieus’ and ‘scenes’ (*Szenen*), and not vice versa as with Bourdieu.

3. The only scholar I know who has dealt thoroughly with Nietzsche and taste (in connection to a theory of consumption) is the Danish historian of ideas Lars-Henrik Schmidt (see Schmidt 1988, in German: Schmidt 1989, 85–111; Schmidt 1990).
4. In German it is as follows: ‘Und ihr sagt mir, Freunde, daß nicht zu streiten sei über Geschmack und Schmecken? Aber alles Leben ist Streit um Geschmack und Schmecken. Geschmack: das ist Gewicht zugleich und Waagschale und Wägender; und wehe allem Lebendigen, das ohne Streit um Gewicht und Waagschale und Wägender leben wollte!’ (Nietzsche 1967a, 624.)
5. This is not so far from Max Weber’s conception. In his speech ‘Science as Vocation’ (1918) Weber said: ‘And, since Nietzsche, we realise that

something can be beautiful, not only in spite of the aspect in which it is not good, but rather in that very aspect. [...] It is commonplace to observe that something may be true although it is not beautiful and not holy and not good. Indeed it may be true in precisely those aspects. But all these are only the most elementary cases of the struggle [Kampf] that the gods of the various orders and values are engaged in. I do not know how one might wish to decide “scientifically” the value of French and German culture; for here, too, different gods struggle [streiten] with one another, now and for all times. [...] Many old gods ascend from their graves; they are disenchanted and hence take the form of impersonal forces. They strive to gain power over our lives and again they resume their eternal struggle with one another [evigen Kampf]’ (Weber 1970, 139–149; Weber 1992, 99–101).

6. ‘Wenn freilich unsre Ästhetiker nicht müde werden, zugunsten Kants in die Waagschale zu werfen, daß man unter dem Zauber der Schönheit *sogar* gewandlose weibliche Statuen “ohne Interesse” anschauen könne, so darf man wohl ein wenig auf ihre Unkosten lachen’ (Nietzsche 1967b, 244).
7. ‘Wie verändert sich der allgemeine Geschmack? Dadurch, daß Einzelne, Mächtige, Einflußreiche ohne Schamgefühl *ihr* hoc est ridiculum, hoc est absurdum, also das Urteil ihres Geschmacks und Ekels, aussprechen und tyrannisch durchsetzen...’ (Nietzsche 1963, 64f). Cf. Nietzsche 1966, 574–577.
8. ‘Das diese einzelnen aber anders empfinden und “schmecken”, das hat gewöhnlich seinen Grund in einer Absonderlichkeit ihrer Lebensweise [...], kurz in der Physis.’ – Schrift (1990, 38–40) calls, referring to Heidegger’s interpretation, Nietzsche’s aesthetic theory a ‘physiology of art’ resting on ‘biological values’ (for ‘bios’ read life).
9. Heidegger says that after *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* ‘Nietzsche never did publish what he really thought’ (Heidegger 1968, 73; cit. Schrift 1990, 15). And what he really thought is to be found in his *Nachlaß*, though only in the form of ‘unthought’: ‘What is *un*-thought in a thinker’s thought is not a lack inherent in his thought. What is *un*-thought is there in each case only as the *un-thought*. The more original the thinking, the richer will be what is unthought in it’ (Heidegger 1968, 76; cit. Schrift 1990, 15). Notice that Bourdieu uses the same term ‘unthought’ (*impensée*) above, but for Bourdieu it has quite another connotation.
10. In his *Nachlaß*, Nietzsche (1966, 717) writes: ‘Unserer Ästhetik war insofern bisher eine Weibs-Ästhetik, als nur die Empfänglichen für Kunst ihre Erfahrung “was ist schön?” formuliert haben. In der ganzen Philosophie bis heute fehlt der Künstler...’
11. In his *Nachlaß* Nietzsche writes: ‘Es ist die Frage der *Kraft* (eines einzelnen oder eines Volkes), *ob* und *wo* das Urteil “schön” angesetzt wird. Das

Gefühl der Fülle, der *aufgestauten Kraft* [...] – das Machtgefühl spricht das Urteil “schön” noch über Dinge und Zustände aus, welche der Instinkt der Ohnmacht nur als *hassenswert*, als “häßlich” abschätzen kann. Die Witterung dafür, womit wir ungefähr fertig werden würden, wenn es leibhaftig entgegengröße, als Gefahr, Problem, Versuchung – diese Witterung bestimmt auch unser ästhetisches Ja. (“Das ist schön” ist eine *Bejahung*.)’ (Nietzsche 1966, 574).

12. ‘Ohne das *Pathos der Distanz*, wie es aus dem eingefleischten Unterschied der Stände, aus dem beständigen Ausblick und Herabblick der herrschenden Kaste auf Untertänige und Werkzeuge und aus ihrer ebenso beständigen Übung im Gehorchen und Befehle, Nieder- und Fernhalten erwächst, könnte auch jenes andre geheimnisvollere Pathos gar nicht erwachsen, jenes Verlangen nach immer neuer Distanz-Erweiterung innerhalb der Seele selbst, die Herausbildung immer höherer, seltenerer, fernerer, weitgespannterer, umfänglicherer Zustände, kurz eben die Erhöhung des Typus “Mensch” [...]’ (Nietzsche 1967d, 146).
13. ‘Und wißt ihr auch, was mir “die Welt” ist? Soll ich sie euch in meinem Spiegel zeigen?... – *Diese Welt ist der Wille zur Macht – und nichts außerdem!* Und auch ihr selber seid dieser Wille zur Macht – und nichts außerdem!’ (Nietzsche 1966, 916–917).
14. Bourdieu’s personal communication to the author, 22 June 1993.

Chapter 4: Truth and Fiction

1. This division into two camps – ‘metaphysicians’ and ‘ironists’ – has recently been much debated in the field of biographical research, e.g. in the *Biography & Society Newsletter*. Among other classifications it has been called ‘realists’ vs. ‘post-structuralists/modernists’ (Roos 1994b) and ‘realists’ vs. ‘idealists’ (Bertaux 1996), both Roos and Bertaux being on the ‘realist’ side (see also Fischer-Rosenthal & Rosenthal 1997). This passionate dispute reached its culmination point at the ISA XIV World Congress of Sociology, Montréal, July 1998, in Research Committee 38: *Biography and Society* Session entitled ‘Biographies as constructions and/or documents’. There on a Wednesday afternoon, 29 July, Wolfram Fischer-Rosenthal and Daniel Bertaux represented these opposite schools without reaching mutual understanding.
2. I must confess that I, too, have done some autobiographical research with J. P. Roos; see Chapter 5: ‘Will to a Distinctive Life Style: In Search of the Finnish New Middle Class’, which was based on the data collected by students participating in our course on qualitative methods of social policy at the University of Helsinki. Spring 1984. We repeated it later in

order to compare the taste differences between the new middle class and the working class (in this case: metalworkers) in Finland, but could not afford any systematic autobiographical interviews (those interviewed were only asked to give brief outlines of their life history, i.e. to draw their ‘life lines’). See Rahkonen, Roos & Seppälä 1989.

3. The French pioneer of this approach, Philippe Lejeune and his *Pacte autobiographique* (Lejeune 1975) were not yet known or at least not mentioned or referred to in Finland in the late 1970s, but they later played a central role in the 1980s’ discussions on autobiographical research.
4. Silverman gives a nice example on medical consultation, a dialogue between a mother, ‘Mrs A’, and the doctor. Silverman ends his interpretation: ‘Mrs A’s replies offer a practical critique of the Reason of the Enlightenment – her position is “illogical” but it works (in terms of providing an effective response to the “charges” available in the doctor’s comments). It also demolishes Romanticism’s version of the “authentic” subject. So Mrs A avoids the intellectual’s mistake of inventing new languages. Instead, she intervenes in and rearticulates an existing language. To paraphrase Foucault: Mrs A does not find herself, she *invents* herself.’ (Silverman 1989, 47)
5. Collecting such data as life stories by organising autobiographical writing competitions involves certain problems with regard to representativeness. The data one gets with the help of competitions are autobiographies of only those people who are really motivated and capable of writing their life stories. Roos does discuss this problem of self-selection, but does not consider it a serious problem (Roos 1987a, 31–33). On the other hand, referring to Bertaux (Roos 1987a, 30), he seems to believe that so-called saturation – the point after which it is not worthwhile to continue collecting any more autobiographies – not only guarantees the representativeness of the sample, but as an end result gains ‘real life’ itself.
6. It will be left for historians of Finnish sociology to unravel the interesting enigma of this ‘Grand Narrative’ of Finnishness produced by Roos (1987a) and some other sociologists and historians (see e.g. Kortteinen 1992; Siltala 1992 and 1994; Roos & Peltonen 1994). In my opinion it can be compared to the late nineteenth-century National Romantic picture of Finns, though in the twentieth century it focuses particularly on Finnish males and their ‘miserable lives’. See also note 9.
7. In my opinion, Roos interprets Bruner’s standpoint a little too freely when he argues that he ‘agrees [...] with Bruner that life itself is a story’ (Roos 1987b, 206). Rather, Bruner does not seem to agree with Roos, but underlines the constructionist character of autobiographies, which have a typically narrative form: ‘a life is not “how it was”, but how it is interpreted and reinterpreted, told and retold’ (Bruner 1987, 31).

8. Klaus Eder has written a beautiful defence of constructionism – which amounts to nothing less than outlining the particular task sociology has to contribute to the debate on the natural environment. It is also a good counter-argument to the anti-constructionist argument – quite similar to Roos' and Bertaux's – 'that we should leave constructionism as a fashion behind us, we should start serious scientific work and leave the question of constructionism to philosophers and epistemologists' (Eder 1997, 2). According to Eder, events are pre-social. Events enter society by being communicated, and they then become part of permanent constructions and reconstructions of (in this case:) nature. Referring to Niklas Luhmann (1989) Eder gives his solution: '[A]ny knowledge about the outside world is an internal, autopoietic process of constructing this outside world' (Eder 1997, 6).
9. The same goes for psychoanalysis. Elaine Showalter, who has written on the history of psychiatry (she is primarily a feminist literary scholar), shows interestingly how Freud in his case study of *Dora* 'believed the nature of the story, rather than the predilections of the story teller, dictated the form: hysterics were unable to tell a complete, "smooth and exact" story of themselves; [...] And this incapacity to give an "ordered history of their life" was not simply characteristic of hysterics – it was the *meaning* of hysteria' (Showalter 1997, 84). She continues with what hits right to the quasi-psychoanalytic approach of reading autobiographies by e.g. J. P. Roos: 'Thus the therapist's role was to edit or construct such narrative for the patient. Freud was confident that no matter how elusive and enigmatic the hysteric's story, the analyst could construct a logical narrative. [...] Freud drew attention to the fragmentary and discontinuous nature of the hysteric's narrative and to the physician's responsibility for reorganizing it into a coherent whole [...]'; and Showalter culminates her argument in the following conclusion: 'Thus the narrative illustrates the doctor's hysteria rather than the patient's' (Showalter 1997, 84–5).
10. It might be worth mentioning as an example that in the autobiographical research circles around Roos an enthusiastic tendency for autobiographies has developed. Researchers of autobiographies have themselves started writing short autobiographies of their own, which, however, are not 'sociological autobiographies' in Merton's sense, but simply autobiographies in a very straightforward manner (see Roos & Rotkirch 1997).
11. Eakin speaks about the 'new model autobiographer' like John Surrock, who is 'free-associative, inspired by psychoanalysis', and Evelyn Hinz, who is 'dramatic and performative' (Eakin 1992, 190).
12. I owe this point to Allan Janik, who pointed this out to me in his letter of 6 March, 1992.
13. Nietzsche opens his 'autobiography' *Ecce Homo: How One Becomes What One Is*, which is in no way a narrative, with a fine picture: 'On this

perfect day, when everything has become ripe and not only grapes are growing brown, a ray of sunlight has fallen on my life: I looked behind me, I looked before me, never have I seen so many and such good things together. Not in vain have I buried my forty-fourth year today [...] – And so I tell myself my life' (Nietzsche 1979, 37).

14. I would like to add that when Anthony Giddens speaks about the growing autonomy of 'life narratives' caused by the growth of 'self-reflexivity' (Giddens 1991, 7–8), he is not referring to biographical research, but to metaphorical sociological discussion about individualisation and modernisation. The same goes for Ulrich Beck's and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim's analysis of the shift from 'normal biography' to 'biography of choice' (or option), 'reflexive biography' and 'do-it-yourself biography' (*Bastelbiographie*) – and, as a risk, to 'rhapsodic biography' (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim 1994, 13). Interestingly this feature of post-traditional life is quite close to the concept of 'controlling one's life' (*elämän hallinta*) developed by Roos (1987a, 66).

Chapter 5: Will to a Distinctive Life Style

1. This article is based on a rather modest material: 23 life stories collected by the participants in a course on qualitative methods of social policy, arranged by the University of Helsinki, Spring 1984. The students were to make life-history interviews and to fill in a questionnaire that with some modifications was drawn from Bourdieu's *Distinction* (Bourdieu 1979, 660ff). For further information about both the material and the questionnaire, see our preliminary report in Swedish: 'Att vilja leva annorlunda' (Roos & Rahkonen 1985).

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